DEKALB
AUBURN
REFLECTION
STACKHOUSE
B9

ECKHART PUBLIC LIBRARY
603 S. Jackson St.
Auburn, IN 46706

REFLECTION

REFLECTION

Hubert L. Stackhouse
2002

HUBERT L. STACKHOUSE

R977.277
STA
(IND. COLL)

ECKHART PUBLIC LIBRARY
603 S. Jackson
Auburn, IN 46706

3/02

By way of explanation:

For what started out to be just 8-10 human interest articles for McComb-Dilgard-Cline's public service ads, this collection grew..and grew...and grew. The 8-10 turned out to be 31, and got into "book". One of them,an Art Smith ad piece; was "spun-off", much enlarged, and presented as a gift to the series patrons. With good-but-unused source material, the author spun off another 30+ articles and a third book. A friend felt we could capitalize on the author's ersatz reputation as a gourmet, and a very successful cookkbook resulted. Still more material remained, and it became the fifth (and final) item of the series.

And then, the author got into a series of medical adventures (which did NOT slow down his writing), and he composed well enough material for a sixth book....but did not publish it. Why? The "adventures" took four operations and three years...and gave the author time to look critically at his own writing. It didn't, in some ways, fare too well. He found many of his medical observations to be sophomoric..naive. And, the praises of friends and readers for the first items of the series seemed to have fully satisfied the needs of the author's ego.

He hasn't totally stopped writing. He "dashed off" a modest piece for the Pickle Festival (for fund raising purposes). He wrote a century's-end article for the Star..at their invitation. He is in his fifteenth year as editor/author of a Lions Club newsletter.

But, he's probably done "Reflecting", per se.

So...what's in this one? The five "books", **"Auburn Reflections", "Brief Candle, the Bird Boy", "On Further Reflection", "Reflections in a Serving Spoon", and.."Son of Reflection"** (the order in which they were written, but bound in a single cover now) About the only readers' aid is to note that each later book has a violet-colored cover. All the rest is directly photocopied from the original master copies.

Enjoy......

Hubert L Stackhouse
1-20-2000

Auburn Reflections

By

Hubert L Stackhouse

© 1993

Table of Contents

Modus Operandi 1

Joy of Sidewalks 2

Trolley Travel 3

Toonerville Trolley-Auburn Style 4

The Great 1898 Carnival 7

The Great 1898 Carnival, Complete with a Recreation of the Battle of Santiago 8

No Bald Headed Indians 11

The Medicine Show Comes to Town 12

The Builders' Decade 14

The Builders' Decade and Eckhart Gifts 15

The Great Eighth St. Double Overhead Bridge 18

Miss Beuret Goes Downtown 19

The Earliest Taxi In Town 20

Learned at My Mother's Knee 21

Hacking it in Auburn 22

A Pre-Auto Auburn 23

The Swamp with The Heart of Gold 26

Not on the A. C. D. Tour 27

The Children's Farewell 29

A Fishy Business 30

Art Smith Lands in Auburn 31

Fly Me to the Moon, Indeed 32

1933 The Iceman Comes 35

Thar She Flows 36

Thar She Flows (article) 37

Anna and the One-Room School 39

The One-Room Splendors of Dekalb County 40

Groucho Takes a Bath in Auburn 43

Wild Bill Story No. 6 44

Ted Builds the Road 45

Rolling Pins and Cement Blocks 46
On Holes in the Ground and Rolling Pins 47
Of Sour Milk and Rubber Bands 50
The Mincemeat Campaign 51
Mother Makes Mincemeat 52
On Summer Kitchens 54
Set 'em Up In the Other Alley 55
A Mason and His Mud 58
Sole Searching 59
The Trolley, the Brew, and the Little Red Wagon 60
The Sunshine Kids 61
And On Into a Future. . . 62
Acknowledgements 64

c. 1993

MODUS OPERANDI

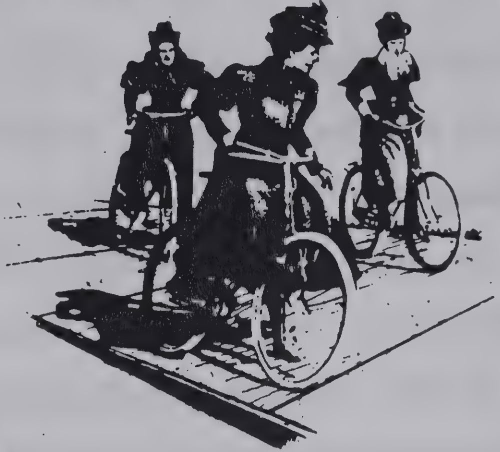
This work was assembled with the specific encouragement of Librarian Sirleine Smith, who has kindly asserted it belonged in the collections of Eckhart Public Library. In collecting the ads as they appeared in the Evening Star, it was noted that many of the earliest ads were written to a much greater length than the Star could use, and that material of interest was perforce omitted. The author saw, and took, the opportunity to have about half of the articles reprinted, alongside the early ads that suffered the most shortening.

Included in the collection are some ad-articles that remained; written and illustrated, but unpublished; when the series was concluded. They will be numbered 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30. The collection will then conclude with a series of 50+ potential subjects, should the need for such a series ever occur again.

The art work that accompanied the series was of varied parentage: articles 1-4 were illustrated by an Indianapolis advertising firm, who also condensed the articles. Articles 5-13 were the talented offerings of the Dekalb Commercial Art Class: respectively, Autumn Whittington, Piper Merrill, Becky Nolan, Dwayne Whitaker, Tiffany Cook, Brian Walker, Tara McClure and Piper Merrill, and Nick Mason. #14 was a photograph, and numbers 15 to 30 were by the author.

Auburn Reflections

THE JOY OF SIDEWALKS



I can remember when sidewalks were not made of concrete, and little people's big toes were not stubbed so terribly. Instead they were made of wood. This, of course, caused splinters big enough to make even the most resolute mothers nearly faint when watching the doctor remove them.

As I recall, the sidewalks were made of 2" x 6" "stringers" with 1"x 4" boards nailed across them. They were not insulated from the earth or weather so the elements quickly deteriorated them.

The most commonly used wood was oak. It was strong, but it was still subject to weather, the wear of passing feet, and the warfare of juveniles.

Children quickly noticed the springiness of the wood. The wooden sidewalks were superb to jump and tread on. If the owner put the boards rather close together, a bumpy rollerskate ride was quite fun. If the boards were farther apart to allow proper drainage, those childen who were lucky enough to have a bicycle enjoyed the vibration-filled ride.

Whatever happened to the oaken path? Concrete took its place! Concrete did not rot; concrete skated much better; concrete rode much faster and smoother; baby buggies navigated it well. And, it stubbed unwary big toes superbly!

Auburn Reflections is a sponsored series intended to reflect on the history of Auburn that might otherwise have gone unnoticed or forgotten.

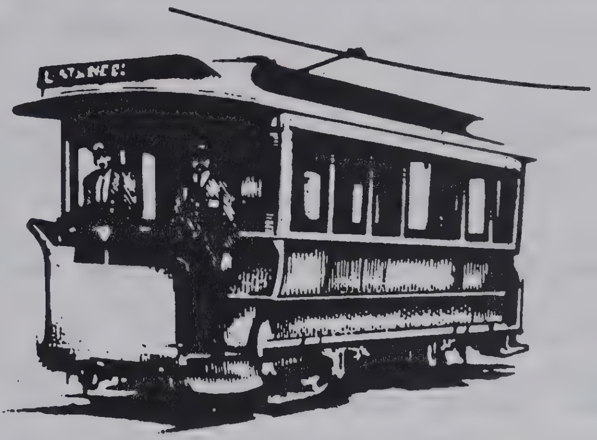
It is written by Hubert Stackhouse, a retired English teacher, whose hobbies include tracing the history of our county, with the collaboration of S. Ted Walters, retired.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

2.

Auburn Reflections 2.

TROLLEY TRAVEL



Are you tired of wrestling traffic on W. 7th or near the by-pass at 5:00? Imagine a mode of transportation that is quick, clean, and inexpensive. Imagine the interurban trolley!

At a time when shopping, visiting, and courting were restricted to an approximate five mile radius, the interurban came as a transportation godsend.

The trolley was powered electrically through a bare power cable suspended above the line. The electricity was transmitted through the "trolley" (a spring loaded contact arm).

The ride itself slightly pitched and rolled no matter how carefully the roadbed was laid. At intersections, crackles and flashes of sparks came from the cables to thrill observing children. But, the bumpy ride and "fire-works" were taken calmly by the experienced rider.

By the 1940's, the interurban had come to an end. People found it much more rewarding and prestigious to travel in their own car.

Although interurban lines are occasionally revived throughout the country, they are yet to provide the main transportation for any community.

For now, our memories are the only remnants of this romantic travel.

Auburn Reflections is a sponsored series intended to reflect on the history of Auburn that might otherwise have gone unnoticed or forgotten.

It is written by Hubert Stackhouse, a retired English teacher, whose hobbies include tracing the history of our county, with the collaboration of S. Ted Walters, retired.

Presented by

McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME

502 N. Main Street, • Auburn IN

219-925-3918

TOONERVILLE TROLLEY - AUBURN STYLE

Tired of wrestling traffic on W. 7th, or the by-pass at 5:00? Like to find a method of travel that would deliver you to the heart of town swiftly, cleanly, and cheaply? There was such a service once available that additionally avoided the muddy roads to Waterloo and the icy peril of Cedar Creek Hill. Behold, the long-gone interurban railway lines that once served a host of communities throughout Indiana!

Founded in an age when personal transportation (the auto) was not the province of every teen-ager, and when 4-wheel drives were Belgians and Percherons; the interurban was for a time a transportation Godsend. Ten cents took you to Waterloo or Garrett; twenty-five cents took you to Ft. Wayne with a few cents more for a transfer to Robinson Park (Ft. Wayne's answer to Cedar Point--an enchantment on the St. Joe River), and a reasonable fare to a host of other points south and west of Ft. Wayne. And, it was environmentally sound!

Powered electrically through a bare power cable suspended above the line, (and transmitted through the "trolley", a spring-loaded contact arm), it was clean. There would be crackles and flashes of sparks at junction points in the cable-- a thrilling premium for watching children, but no great shakes to the mature traveller. The ride pitched and rolled slightly, no matter how carefully laid the roadbed, but this was also borne stoicly by the rider.

Viewed now, perhaps the most impressive feature was the scope of the operation--the network of connecting lines and the great flexibility of travel provided. A few privileged Auburnites know of the courtship of a young Auburn coach, whose fiance taught the full day in Kokomo, caught the interurban after school, made the necessary transfers, and arrived at the east door of Alumni Gym at the half-time of the varsity basketball game. Try that now by bus, plane or whatever!

The lines went no farther north than Kendallville and Angola but southward--certainly to Indianapolis and most of Central Indiana. They ran in almost all weathers, ran on much more frequent schedule than the railroads, and were competitively priced. Reminders, remainder, mementoes? The South Road to Garrett and Old #27 to Waterloo have exceptionally wide right-of-ways, the legacy of the abandoned interurban. Ensley Avenue once sported a graveled strip down its middle, the old roadbed. Cedar Street still has paved-over sections of the roadbed, complete with ties en situ (as were revealed in the sewer excavations of the early 1960's). Two buildings that housed former depots still stand in town--the middle of the Andres Insurance building facing Cedar Street, and the old Auburn Burner Building at 12th and Cedar. The Swartz Building/Spink Hotel depot at 9th and Cedar has given away to a modern law office. All housed interurban stations once. And, in a home or two may be found short sections of the interurban rail cut down to make home anvils, nut-crackers, and the like.

Romantic vignettes of interurban days? The late Dale Rakestraw had among his effects a newspaper reporting the tragic streetcar wreck of Kentland, which saw the loss of more than 20 lives, including some Dekalb County natives.

What, then, became of this wonder of travel? "Henry Ford" "done her in". When every home gained a car and roads became better, the pool of necessary riders was drained. Even though 90% of Auburn homes were a reasonable walk from a carstop, there was greater convenience in going in your own car--and prestige! Since Auburn had seen the manufacture of so many different autos, it would have been un-civic not to own a car at first chance!

And so, early in the 30's the demise of the interurban began. By 1940, no more cars ran through Auburn. But, ironically, by the early 40's, wartime shortages would have made the 'trolley" a most welcome mode of travel; and again, following the Arab oil crisis of '73, it would have served so very well.

Here and there about the country, interurban lines are revived from time to time--the latest of note being from San Diego, California to the Mexican Border. They seem to be flourishing, but not in locales such as ours. The "trolley" is gone, but not yet forgotten.

Auburn Reflections 3.

THE GREAT 1898 CARNIVAL

Everyone but everyone in Auburn attended the "Great 1898 Carnival" to commemorate America's victory in the Battle of Santiago.

Three full days of civic activities were scheduled, including band concerts, a Royal Pageant, balloon ascensions, and parachute drops. The grand finale was the re-creation of the Battle of Santiago.

According to historical newspaper accounts, there were some conflicting attitudes in some of the citizens attending the events. A local body, the Social Purity group, objected to the "girlie" show. But the **Clipper** accused the group of selective enforcement and said that the group ignored the show at Henry's Opera House where women appeared in "short skirts".

The grand finale utilized Pain's Fireworks, and area militia buffs were recruited to recreate the celebrated victory. The battle was to be brief, but exciting. However, the action on the bleachers may have been more exciting.

Bleacher seats cost $.20 each, but the people who arrived first sat in the front and did not allow others to pass through them to reach the seats at the top. It was just as well though, because the structure collapsed when only a small portion of the audience was seated. Remarkably, no one was seriously injured.

All in all, the 3-day celebration was a success!

Auburn Reflections is a sponsored series intended to reflect on the history of Auburn that might otherwise have gone unnoticed or forgotten.

It is written by Hubert Stackhouse, a retired English teacher, whose hobbies include tracing the history of our county, with the collaboration of S. Ted Walters, retired.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

The Great 1898 Carnival, Complete with a
RECREATION of the BATTLE of SANTIAGO

July 3, 1898 -- American fleet, under Commodore W.S. Schley defeats Spanish fleet. Invasion and investment of Santiago, Cuba, follows. Battle of San Juan Hill ensues, Col. Teddy Roosevelt et al., Santiago and environs secured by July 17th.

September 22, 23, 24 -- Everyone, but Everyone, in Auburn participated in the "Great 1898 Carnival," to commemorate Victory in Cuba and resultant burst of patriotic sentiment. Three wonderful days of civic excess were scheduled, culminating in the re-creation of the Battle of Santiago. Bleacher seating for more than 2,000 was constructed (20 cents a seat), and Pain's Fireworks and area militia buffs were recruited to recreate the celebrated victory. Special trains were laid on by the Lake Shore Line, the B&O, and Wabash Line, and scheduled to depart at 9:30 PM or shortly thereafter.

The various newspaper accounts said little of the weather for the carnival, indicating Mother Nature must have cooperated. However, some stormy weather, morally, was recorded. A local group, dubbed the "Social Purity" group, objected effectively to the "girlie" show, particularly to the "hootchy-coochey." The **Clipper** held the outcry in derision, probably manufacturing an incident in which the editor claimed to have seen an Auburn minister taking in such a show at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The **Clipper** accused the group of selective enforcement, claiming it had ignored the show at Henry's Opera House (where women appeared "in short skirts"); of an exhibition of a "petrified woman from the Johnstown Flood, naked"; of young boys, girls, and women drinking in saloons; and of ten of fifteen gambling houses running wide open! ***In Auburn?*** The **Clipper** would sum it all up in a heading of one if its many columns, "There was about the Auburn Carnival everything that was grand, but characteristic of the town, everything was mismanaged and overdone." (Ninety-four years later, that statement still confuses).

The **Clipper** might seem to have been grinding an ax. Other papers were generally laudatory--even effusive; and particularly, Auburn papers.

They lauded the variety of attractions: band concerts by two local bands, each of which had recruited outsiders to swell its numbers; parades--"human menagerie", bicycle, and circus; a statuary and living picture (tableau) show; a Royal Pageant; a balloon ascensions (all three days), replete with parachute drops and "shot from the clouds[?]"; a mammoth kite exhibition; free vaudeville performances by "salaried artistes," and "powerful search light and electric fountain."

The prose flattered--near-caressed--the performers in the floral floats, in the living picture (tableau) in the decorated bicycle competition. Praises were paid the Maccabees, the Jolite Club, the L.L.C., the G.A.R., the Rathbone Sisters, and the Degree of Honor among others.

The grand finale, however, drew mixed reviews. It was to be the re-creation of the Battle of Santiago, on Madden's Field, by the "German Military Company of Garrett", the "Auburn Light Artillery", and a company of infantry gathered together for the occasion. The battle was to be brief, but exciting. It may not have matched the action in the stands that preceded it. The Clipper remarked rather pithily that the first to arrive took their seats nearest the ground level (on the bleachers, at 20 cents each) and thereafter refused to allow later arrivals to pass through them to the higher reaches of the structure. (Just as well, since the structure collapsed when only a portion of the 10,000 to 20,000 estimated attendees had gotten on it.) Injuries? Remarkably, none were mentioned. The police were either adequate (Auburn papers), or inept (**Clipper**).

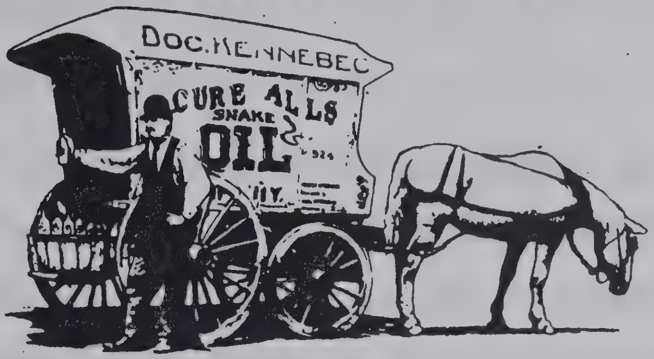
And then, the program was late.....woefully late, in getting started. Scheduled for 8:00 PM, accounts suggest it was at least 40 minutes late in the offing. The Auburn papers suggested that Pain confirmed his reputation as the world's greatest fireworks exhibitor; the **Clipper** suggested that any who dealt with him in the future should get an ironclad contract with penalty clauses to protect themselves. Due to the lateness, part of the crowd left early, but the **Clipper** suggested that many missed their trains due to the delays.

This grand cultural adventure had been a follow-up to the very successful Carnival of 1896, and the papers speculated whether it might merit another in '99. Considering the logistics--the transportation, the public facilities necessary, the crowd control-they had an impressive accomplishment whether they chose to repeat it or not.

Gleaned form Garrett Clipper, September 15, 1898 Auburn Courier,AshleyTimes, Hudson Banner, Ft. Wayne Journal, Auburn Evening Dispatch, , and Selected Carnival Programs and Poetic Offerings.

Auburn Reflections 4.

NO BALD HEADED INDIANS



At a time when travel was slow and often times painful, not very many people were able to experience the wide, wide world first hand. However, there was one thing that brought some of that mysterious, romantic world to us: the ever famous medicine show!

There didn't seem to be much advance advertising, but somehow the public always knew when the medicine wagon headed toward old Madden's Field, where many of the shows took place.

Their wagon, quite often, was a marvel of construction that could be converted into their performing stage by dropping one side for a floor and raising an awning above. The crowd was entertained and "worked" until it bought or thinned out to an unprofitable attendance.

The "medicines" could cure the world with their snake oil, herbal wonder, and Indian remedies. Some of the medicines cured "lack of vitality"-a veiled allusion to sexual prowess, and some were said to cure baldness. After all, "You've never seen a bald headed Indian, have you?"

Medicine shows were never really challenged by dissatisfied customers because the shows never played in the same town twice. And deep down, it may be suspected that we didn't mind the flim-flam . . . if it were attractively packaged.

Auburn Reflections is a sponsored series intended to reflect on the history of Auburn that might otherwise have gone unnoticed or forgotten.

It is written by Hubert Stackhouse, a retired English teacher, whose hobbies include tracing the history of our county, with the collaboration of S. Ted Walters, retired.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

THE MEDICINE SHOW COMES TO TOWN

In the tens, twenties, and thirties of this century, travel was considerably less convenient than now, and a much smaller portion of the populace was exposed to "outside influences." There was limited exposure to the world via radio; movies were largely un-realistic; television was still a laboratory curiosity. But, once in a while, the romantic, far-away places did seem to come to us via the traveling circuses, carnivals, circuses, and the "Princes of the Flim-Flam," the medicine shows.

There would have been little advance publicity, but somehow, everyone quickly learned when there was a traveling Doctor/Professor/Chief and his crew in town. They would hardly have arrived at Madden's Field, at the lot behind the DX station at Union and 7th, or even on the Court Square before the juvenile rag-tag-and bobtail of the town had inspected them and scattered to give the news. And, if they chanced to come of a Saturday, the crowd was ready made for the education/entertainment/skinning.

The bait was the entertainment,featuring such as a banjo player, a magician, a bedizened Indian chief of high-sounding title, and a spiel that would arouse green envy from an industrial-tent Veg-a-matic demonstrator. They really never had to face a disappointed crown, hostile to their particular nostrum; they never played the same town twice. You would have had no chance to complain if their product didn't deliver.

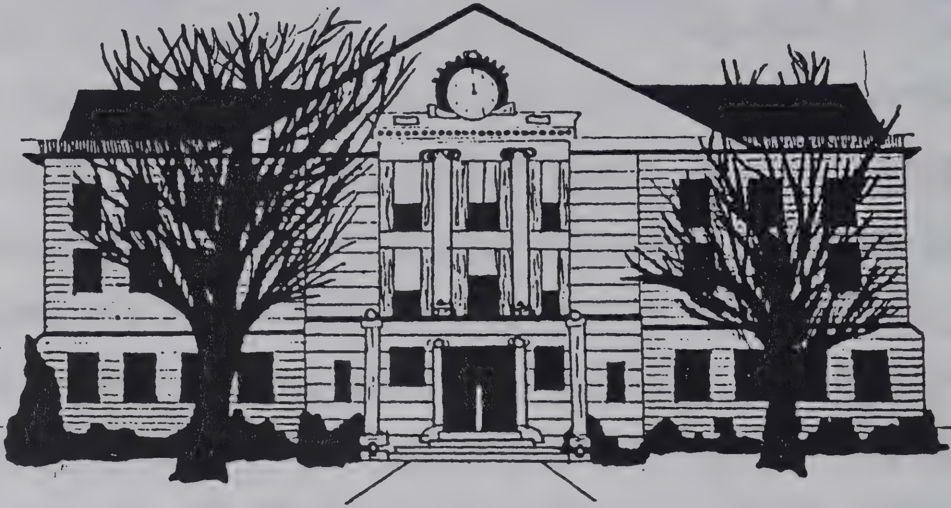
What, really, would their product cure? Well, the snake oil was good for anything and everything, including (in thinly veiled references) sexual prowess. Baldness was one of its specialties, for "You never saw a bald-headed Indian!"

Their hawkers worked the crowd skillfully, and kept working as long as the crowd or its willingness to buy held out. The price had to be high enough to instill confidence in the contents, but not so high as to put it out of ordinary reach. Sometimes the sting would be lessened by inclusion of fabulous prizes (all gee-en--uuuu-ine gold or diamond, or otherwise precious in some sense).

Did the product ever really work? Well, we are told that many of our ills ar mind-induced, and if a little showmanship made you believe in something for a moment, who knows? In any case, you had been entertained, the tedium relieved, and for that, perhaps you would endure a little flim-flam.

Auburn Reflections 5.

THE BUILDERS' DECADE



No period in Auburn's history saw--or will again see--as much change in the public structures as the decade from 1910 to 1920. Not less than seven major improvements were built in this period, and if one adds the dredging of Cedar Creek (which just preceeded the period), it was a veritable feast for the sidewalk superintendent.

Leading the way for this boom was the town's premier benefactor, Charles Eckhart, with the aid of his sons. In 1910, "Uncle Charlie" founded the Library with the first of his gifts that would total more than $50,000--a princely sum for that age. In 1912, Uncle Charlie and his son, Frank, founded the YMCA with the first of their gifts that would total another $50,000. A YMCA in a town of Auburn's size was nearly unheard of--unless you had an Eckhart. The third gift was the Park named for the Eckharts, constructed about the year of Charles Eckhart's death (1915). This gift, coupled with the gift of playground equipment to every school in Auburn, probably impressed the children of Auburn more than any other. Dollarwise, no; but funwise, yes.

While the above privately-funded projects were underway, the public sector was seeing the construction of a new Court House, probably the most majestic structure in the County. The old Court House and County Jail structures were razed from the square, part of the court records were stored in McIntyre building No. 2 on West Eighth Street. There, they were destroyed by the disastrous fire of 1913. When the new Court House was ready for occupancy in 1914, three acts of the Legislature were required to unsnarl the mess.

With the razing of the jail, a new County Jail and Sheriff's residence was necessary, and was built. At the same time, the City of Auburn was constructing a new City Hall, three splendid stories high-with-bell-tower (for sounding fire alarms).

And finally (for our decade), begun in 1916 and not completed until 1921 due to the shortages of WWI, McIntosh High School.

And then, the decade of splendor was over never again to be matched in scope or number.

Auburn Reflections is a sponsored series intended to reflect on the history of Auburn that might otherwise have gone unnoticed or forgotten.

It is written by H. Stackhouse with the collaboration of S. Ted Walters.

Artwork prepared by Autumn Whittington, DeKalb High School Commerical Art Class.

Presented by

McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME

502 N. Main Street • Auburn, IN

219-925-3918

THE BUILDER'S DECADE AND ECKHART GIFTS

No decade in Auburn's history saw as much change and establishment of lasting civic landmarks as the second of this century, 1910-1920; and no one, before or since, has ever had the effect on Auburn that Charles Eckhart did in that ten year period. As the decade opened, the town lacked a public library, any substantial public recreation area, a YMCA (not really common to even to much larger towns than Auburn, then or now). When the decade closed, Mr. Eckhart had provided for a finer library than Andrew Carnegie would have underwritten--and with a modest endowment to accompany it. Mr. Eckhart had donated land and funds for what is still Auburn's largest park. And, Mr. Eckhart had built for Auburn a YMCA unparalleled in towns of our size.

Why?

Mr. Eckhart came to Auburn with a clear understanding of the purpose and rewards of hard work, having gone to work with his father in 1849 at eight years of age. He came also with a sense of moral responsibility, the natural outgrowth of his Pennsylvania-Dutch ancestry. He married a Waterloo girl, a Miss Barbara Aschleman of one of the county's pioneering families: and returned with her to Pennsylvania to join a former employer as a partner in the buggy building business. By 1874, the Eckharts, with children Frank, Annie, Morris, and William, were back in Auburn at 915 E. 7th...and building the first of the Auburn buggies in his parlor. The business grew rapidly, expanding to a structure built on the south end of the lot, but using the house for office space.

By 1900, Eckhart had also entered the automobile business, a rather natural outgrowth of his buggy works. By 1905, the business had prospered enough to merit the manufacture of a two-story, 60 X 100 building solely for auto construction. The following year, the operation was moved in part to a new building at the juncture of the Vandalia (Eel River RR) tracks and S. Wayne Street, just north of the present ACD showroom.

By 1910, Charles Eckhart was 69 years old and thinking of posterity. He was already the benefactor of children in Auburn, having furnished fine playground equipment to each of the schools. Now would begin a series of extraordinary gifts to the town, but particularly oriented toward the children and families. The gifts are the more remarkable for the fact that the town had not always agreed with him-on moral and prohibition grounds.

The first gift--a library. When the Carnegie interests did not offer sufficient underwriting for the quality of library that Charles wanted, he rejected their offer and underwrote a building, shelf stock; and eventually, a cast iron fountain. He additionally set up an endowment of $15,000 against future needs--a grand total of more than $50,000. The Carnegie offer had been for $12,500.

This gift was recognized in oratory by Governor Thomas Marshall, five years later to become Woodrow Wilson's Vice-President. (The ceremony was re-created in 1986 on the 75th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone.) The resultant building was a fine example of the Prairie School of Architecture. Its fountain is a rarity of its type in our area, and a continuing challenge to the restorer's art.

The second gift, begun in 1914 in the year before Charles Eckhart's death, was the park on S. Cedar Street that bears his name. He purchased a strip of land between Woodlawn Cemetery and his Auburn Auto plant on S. Wayne, and had it landscaped into a family park. Completed in 1915, it featured a spacious pavilion, twin roofed dining areas, playground equipment for the children, and a steel bridge over the Cedar Creek that has lasted these many years. Three generations of Auburn families have picnicked there; uncounted family reunions have been held in his pavilion, as he would have wanted.

The third gift was begun before his death and completed in 1916. It was perhaps the most expansive of all--a YMCA of the finest design - - in a town that, by the standards of the day, was too small for one. **Actually**, the finishing touches had hardly been put on the Library when the father and his son, Frank, jointly dedicated $40,000 for the construction of a unique facility in Auburn. Subsequently, another $10,000 would be donated to complete the equipping of this prodigy; a large wooden playing floor for volleyball, basketball, calesthentics, and group recreation; the county's first and only public indoor swimming facility; a two-lane bowling alley; meeting and food preparation rooms; and a dormitory for single males.

At each cornerstone laying ceremony, appropriate and flowery tributes were paid to the benefactors--most frequently spoken by town fathers and similar dignitaries. It is probable that he knew, but never heard fully expressed, the gratitude of Auburn's youngsters for the enrichment of their lives. True, they did pay their final respects, filing past his coffin as he lay in state in his home in very early October of 1915. He would not have sought the honor; but now, nearly 75 years after his death, he still remains Auburn's most prominent benefactor.

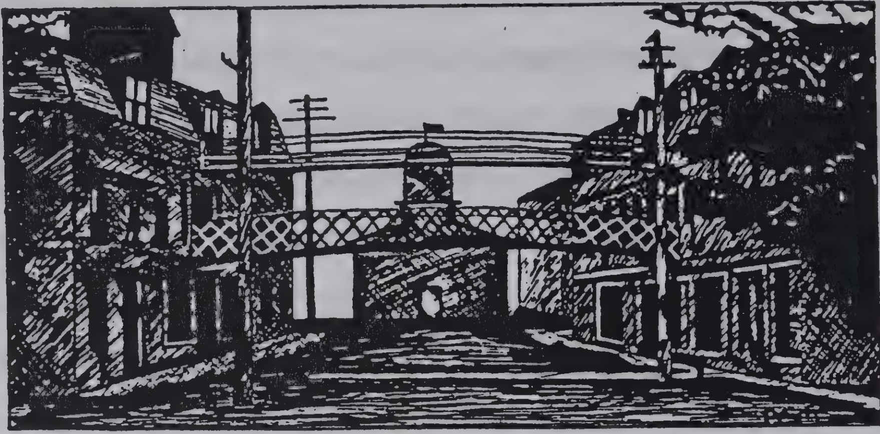
But the Eckharts' gifts were not the only attraction to the sidewalk superintendents in this remarkable decade.. Consider: By 1910, the dredging of Cedar Creek was accomplished, including the straightening of several inconvenient kinks within the Auburn town limits; in 1911, the Library was begun; in 1912 and 1913, the Auburn City Hall was being built; in 1913 and 1914, the most impressive building in Dekalb County history was under construction--the County Court House; in 1915, the Park was completed; in 1915, the YMCA was begun, to be finished in 1916. Co-incident with the building of the Court House, the Dekalb County Jail and Sheriff's Residence were built; and beginning in 1916 and continuing until 1921 (construction prolonged by WWI shortages), McIntosh High School.

The collaborator of this series, Mr. Ted Walters, served as a laborer--a hod carrier--on the building of some of the later structures of the period, as he was to serve as a construction worker on the U. S. Post Office building in the 1930's.

All in all, it was an unmatched period in the creation of Auburn's infrastructure, and its likes will not come again.

Auburn Reflections 6,

The Great, Eighth Street Double-Overhead Bridge



The scanty memento of one of Early Auburn's most interesting structures now clings to the back of the Cunningham Pharmacy on West Eighth Street, the Double-Overhead Bridge. A single second-story door, lately used to hoist furniture to storage for a previous tenant of the building, indicates the location of the bottom half of the remarkable structure. But, prior to the disastrous 1913 fire; twin, over-and-under bridges sprang from the second and third stories of McIntyre Plants No. 2 and No. 3. They enabled movement of the complete chassis of McIntyre cars. If the size of the present door strains the credulity of the previous statement, please recall that autos of that age were much lighter, and that the celebrated IMP Cycle car was a smallish car, even for that age. It is also likely that the remodeling of the building and subsequent face-lifts have changed the size of the opening.

error —

The fire of 1913 destroyed the south structure, taking not only one-half of the vital works, but also many of the court records of DeKalb County (stored there during the construction of the new Court House). It also destroyed one of the town's three newspapers. As a result of the fire, the McIntyre production was effectively crippled; Court records--particularly land records--were seriously undermined, requiring three acts of the Indiana Legislature to remedy; and all three of the town papers came to be published in the new Auburn Printing Company building, constructed beside the new Temple Building.

-error

The North building, following the end of the McIntrye operation in 1914, subsequently housed the Gushwa-Hoff Garage, a beer distributorship, a Kroger Store, the Gerig Furniture Company, Bale Appliances, Davis Appliances, and Cunningham Pharmacy, among others. Fine as any of these businesses were, they would never capture the mystique of the original use to manufacture the DeKalb or the McIntrye or the IMP.

Auburn Reflections is a sponsored series intended to reflect the history of Auburn that might otherwise have gone unnoticed or forgotten.

It is written by H. Stackhouse with the collaboration of S. Ted Walters.

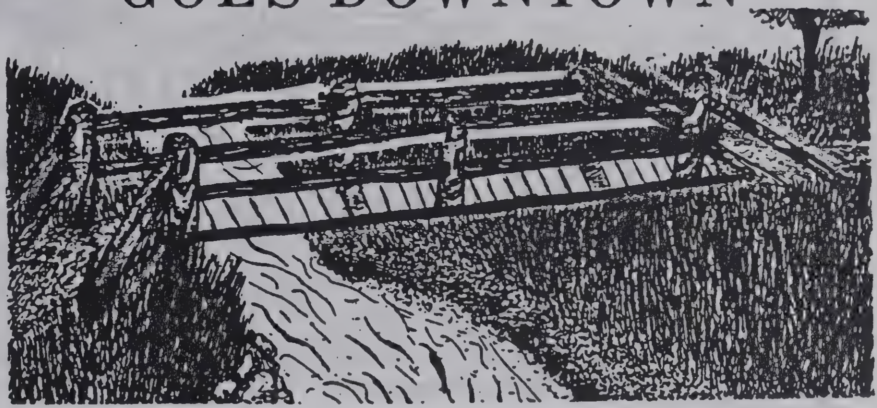
Artwork prepared by Piper Merrell, DeKalb High School Commerical Art Class.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

18.

Auburn Reflections 7.

MISS BEURET GOES DOWNTOWN



Well before the turn of the century, the Beuret family moved to Auburn from Switzerland and then Academy Junction and took residence in a stately brick house west of the small creek and bridge on West Fourth Street. We pass such spots daily now, little noting the subtle geographic features or wondering how they came to be.

If you had lived on West Second or Fourth Streets, then you would have considerable cause to notice them, particularly after a rain of any dimension. The small stream, which seemed to have its origin in the area of North Street and the railroad, filled its banks; and but for the bridge on Fourth Street (about midway in the 300 block), effectively barred residents from the "downtown" area. To properly estimate its course, one need only travel Second or Fourth Street and note the lowest spots, near the present parking lot and Nazarene Church.

What became of the stream and bridge? While settlement was sparse and land values low, there was no pressure to allieviate the situation. But, as the town expanded and more building took place, the stream was replaced by the system of sewers. Fill dirt for the stream was available from basement excavation, sewer and street construction, and area "borrow" pits. The "bridge" that arched the "flood" was dismantled and disappeared into memories, which in turn pay their toll to time. Miss Esther Beuret had been born in the house on West Fourth, played as a child along the banks of the stream, and crossed it many times on her way downtown. Before she departed this world a few years back, she reminisced about the bridge to a friend, who relayed the information to the author.

Auburn Reflections is a sponsored series intended to reflect on the history of Auburn that might have gone unnoticed or forgotten.

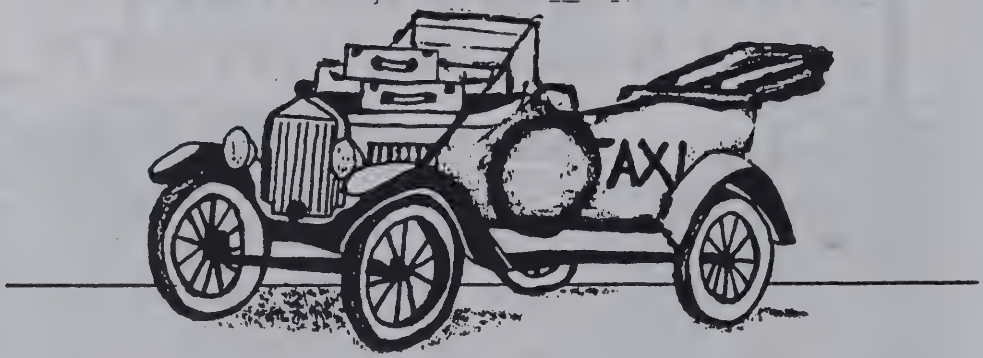
It is written by H. Stackhouse, with the collaboration of S. Ted Walters, retired.

Artwork prepared by Becky Nolan, DeKalb High School Commercial Art Class.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

Auburn Reflections

THE EARLIEST TAXI IN TOWN



When the age of Old Dobbin began to pass in Auburn, the first of the local entrepreneurs to capitalize on it was the Jenner family. They had operated a horse-drawn hack service out of a location later occupied by the old County Jail and Sheriff's Residence on Cedar Street.

Something more modern seemed called for, and so Auburn's first motorized taxi came into being. It was not made originally for that purpose, but was rather the product of the Jenner brothers ingenuity. It was, of course, a Ford (and in a town where the Auburn was was to be king, too!).

A Ford, naturally black. High wooden-spoked wheels. Only ONE door, and that on the right side about where the rear-right door would be on our four-door sedan. All entered by that door, including the driver. Those in front stepped foreward to their seats, and there met adventure. Luggage was stored ON THE HOOD on a flat rack, presumably as much out of the driver's line-of-sight as possible. But if there were enough passengers, and if they had lots of luggage--lots of luck!

Spark and throttle set, choke properly adjusted, the Ford was ready for hand cranking. When it caught fire, a quick trip to the door on the right, careful re-adjustment of the controls (mostly mounted on the steering column), and it could be shifted into gear (not a simple matter, this! There was a bouquet of foot pedals and hand levers to be handled in proper order.)

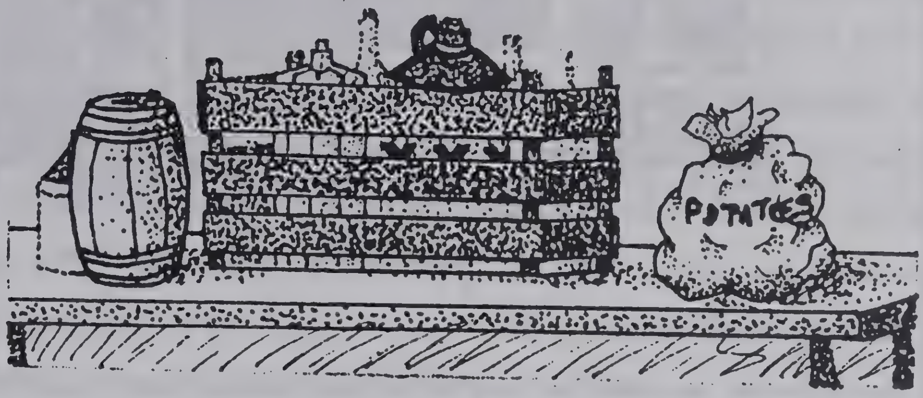
And so, onto the sometimes-graveled streets and unimproved dirt roads of DeKalb County. Dust a-plenty, mud in season, and enough bumps and rattles to last a lifetime. It was progress!

Auburn Reflections is a sponsored series intended to reflect on the history of Auburn that might have gone unnoticed or forgotten. It is written by H. Stackhouse with the collaboration of S. Ted Walters, retired. Artwork prepared by Dwayne Whitaker, DeKalb High School Commercial Art Class.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

Auburn Reflections 9

LEARNED AT MY MOTHER'S KNEE



"We live in an age of miracles,", a humorist once remarked. Viewing Cable Channel 28 on Sundays (that day devoted entirely to medical subjects), one is tempted to observe, "You haven't seen anything yet!"

Compared to "now", "then" seems to have been the stone age, medically speaking. But then, we strike the proper key with an old-timer, and we may learn that Mother knew a thing or two about medicine, also. Modern medical perfectionists, be prepared to be appalled by the news that:

scraped raw beet, applied to a puncture wound, could help prevent infection...scraped raw potato made an effective poultice to sore eyes, and...

flax-seed poultices were superior for drawing out infection, and a spoonful of black (gun) powder, covered with syrup, was a capital remedy for sore throat, as was...

a few drops of coal-oil (kerosene) on a spoonful of white sugar.

Of course, we all knew that sulfur and molasses thinned the blood in the springtime, as did sassafrass tea. And, there was such a thing as skunk oil, available from any competent drug store, and an all-round cure for about anything (including social congestion). We knew the use of oatmeal baths for skin problems, of catnip tea for the croup, of used chewing tobacco as a dressing for cuts, and castor oil for both purgative and punitive purposes.

And more, and more, and more! Mullen leaf poultices, Indian herbal remedies, and mustard plasters (a clear violation of the Constitutional protection against cruel and inhumane punishment). And for as many as given above, there were a dozen more each--remedies not really delicate or discrete enough for a family journal such as this, but effective, none the less.

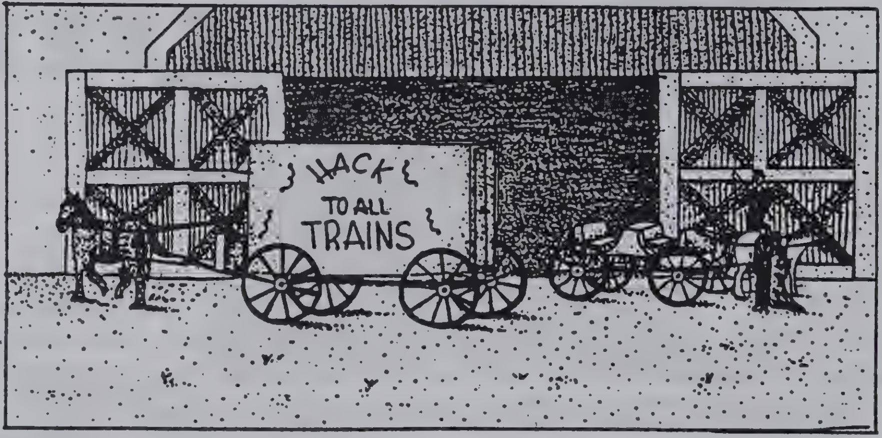
Would we go back to those remedies, if we could? Likely not, but be cautious about feeling superior. They could get over a cold in a week. How long did your last cure take?

Auburn Reflections is a sponsored series intended to reflect on the history of Auburn that might have gone unnoticed or forgotten. It is written by H. Stackhouse with the collaboration of S. Ted Walters, retired. Artwork prepared by Tiffani Cook, DeKalb High School Commercial Art Class.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

Auburn Reflections 10

HACKING IT IN AUBURN



It would be hard to imagine Auburn without cars, considering its significance in past and present dependence on car manufacturing: but, for one-half of its 150+ year history, horses--not cars--were it.

Arriving in town on any of the three passenger railroads, you'd have been met by a horse-drawn hack and taken to your hotel (of which there were not less than five at one time or another). To get around town from there, you'd have gone on foot; or more likely, rented a horse and buggy, possibly with a driver. To serve such needs, as well as stabling the animals of such townspeople as didn't have stables of their own, there were not less than seven stables. Among the largest would have been those that occupied Union Street between 8th and 9th (the present House of Spirits and Legion parking lots), and ⅔'s of the block between 5th and 6th on Jackson, east side. Others included the Jenner Brothers (old County Jail location on Cedar), one on the site of the Bassett Motor Sales (in the same building!) on Cedar, on the corner of 7th and Union (Holben Auto Repair), 9th and Jackson (across from Auburn Printing), and on the southwest corner of 9th and Union.

Blacksmith shops? Surely...five of them, at least, including the last of the smiths in Auburn, George Merryfield on 11th near Union (Bassett's Electric Motors Repair Shop).

Why so many 'horse stores'? Auburn did have a great number of visitors in that age, having even then a substantial manufacturing base; and locals needed their horses shod, bred (Nichols Stables) and sheltered. Here and there about town can be found the remnants of carriage houses and barns, indicating that not all animals were boarded out, but many were.

AUBURN REFLECTIONS is a sponsored series intended to reflect the history of Auburn that might otherwise have gone unnoticed or forgotten.

It is written by H. Stackhouse with the collaboration of S. Ted Walters.

Artwork prepared by Tiffani Cook, DeKalb High School Commercial Art Class.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

A PRE-AUTO AUBURN

It is difficult to imagine an Auburn, Indiana, without its signature product, the automobile; but, for the greater part of its 150+ years, that is what it was. Prior to the end of WW1, if you had travelled here from any great distance, you'd have come by train or interurban. A knowing eye would have observed that farmers around the town planted somewhat differently (than they do now): much greater expanses of hay (alfalfa, clover, or timothy-- a favorite of horses). The use of draft horses, rather than tractors or other power equipment, would also have been obvious.

Arriving in town on the B&O, the Eel River, or the Ft. Wayne, Jackson, and Saginaw, you'd immediately have met the great difference in transportation: all movement, save walking, was by horse. You'd have been met at the depot by a hack (horse "taxi") provided by one of the hotels (perhaps the Swineford House), or by a hack service that provided rides to the hotel/rooming house district for modest fee.

Arriving on the interurban, no hack was needed. The line went on streets where not less than four hotels had been located at one time or another, and the downtown station was a single block from the Swineford (present Auburn Hotel building).

If you had business that required transportation within the town, within easy walking distance of the Swineford and the Spink Hotels downtown, as well as the numerous downtown rooming houses, were not less than seven livery stables or hack rentals. Where? A large stable occupying 2/3's of the block bounded by Main & Jackson and 5th and 6th Streets, a large stable directly south of the present Auburn Printing Co. building, a stable occupying the building that later became the Bassett Motor Sales on Cedar at 11th Street, the Jenner Brothers Livery at the precise location of the old County Jail on Cedar, Jake Nichols Breeding Stables on the southeast corner of 7th and Union Streets, the largest stable of all, occupying the entire are now held by the House of Spirits and American Legion parking lot on Union Street between 8th and 9th Streets, and a smaller stable on the southwest corner of 9th and Union Streets.

Why so many? There were at least four distinct needs to be met. Horses owned by local citizens had to be boarded; hacks-with-driver were rented to visitors; visitors could rent horse and rig if they chose to drive themselves, and with Nichols Stables, propagation assured.

To serve the obvious needs of such a large equine population, a constant stream of wagon loads of hay and bedding straw entered the town, to be unloaded by hand or by hay hooks, slings, and pulleys. In due course, a natural by-product was to be disposed of--rather easily. Virtually every townsman had a garden and coveted the "product."

An additional need of the animals was good smithing and veterinary services. Our consultant, Mr. Walters, could readily remember five blacksmiths--Musser, the son, just west of 1st Street and Van Buren; earlier, Musser, the elder, on 6th Street between present Tri-State Memorials and Renaissance Corp., George Merryfield's Shop on 12th Street between Cedar and Union (present location of Bassett Motors; a very reputable wagon and blacksmith shop in the corner of 15th and Main Street (SW corner), and a carriage "factory" on the southeast corner of the Court Square, with a blacksmith shop behind it on 10th Street.

And the services rendered? Ferriers first, serving the needs of horses to be shod; wheelwrights, fitting and repairing wagons and buggies; wrought iron work for home and farm; sharpening plow points and repairing farm equipment; and, whimsically, entertaining children and the idle with the flaming and spectacular displays of the forge, the anvil, and the quenching tank.

Early footnote: the many factories in booming Auburn attracted laborers without marital attachments (at least no house and home in town yet). They were served by rooming houses that stood, at one time or another, at 10th and Van Buren, at 5th and Main, at 10th and Main, and at Jackson and 9th--among other locations. An even larger number of laborers came from Garrett and Waterloo and surrounding territory, ferried here by interurban that neatly matched the early morning-late afternoon demand.

single [illegible]

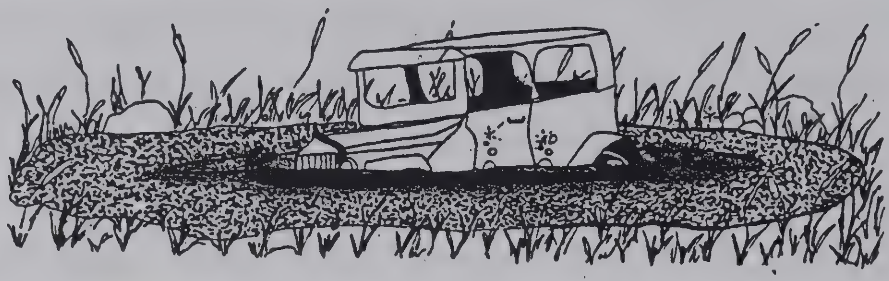
Dramatic episodes recalled by our consultant? A horse and wagon, tied to the hitching rail at the Nebelung Department Store (9th and Main--the present Sprinkling Can location), was "spooked" as its driver turned it west onto 9th. Runaway! ---Short runaway, that is , for when the team crossed Jackson Street, within the next half block it left the paved portion of 9th Street, was so deeply mired in the mud of the unimproved street that it came to a complete halt. Runaways, in general were no laughing matter; nor was "drag racing" by youngbloods and the gamesome.

Sadly (for animal lovers), Henry Ford and his cohorts "done them in" with the ubiquitous, affordable automobile. One by one, stables were closed and smithies abandoned. By the early

1930's, only Mr Merryfield plied his trade. Something special was gone--try putting used crankcase oil on your garden, of you don't think so!

Auburn Reflections 11

THE SWAMP WITH THE HEART OF GOLD



wrong illus. - no body - just motor/chassis/wh

Auto buffs, take notice! There are four or five Auburn auto chassis and motors, probably in near-mint condition, waiting for some adventurous soul (with lots of money) to recover them. They lie perhaps 35-50 feet deep in "The Great Tamarack Bog" on CR 59 about two miles north of St. Joe.

In the 1912-1913 period, an attempt was being made to fill-in a stable roadbed through the swamp. The author's father, along with a host of other drayers, hauled wagonload after wagonload of fill material and dumped it along the roadbed. Their efforts were only temporarily successful, inasmuch as torrential rains every few years put the entire area under water and destabilized their construction.

In that fateful summer, such a rain had put the roadway underwater, creating a perilous situation for anyone foolhardy enough to transit the area. Into this situation came a procession of Auburn autos, out on a test run. As mentioned, they consisted of only chassis and motor, with a minimal seating for the driver. The procession came over the Wabash railroad to the north and down the hill into the flooded area. It attempted the passage, unsuccessfully. Four or five of the vehicles slewed off the narrow roadway into the bog before the folly became fully evident. As they began sinking, their drivers scrambled to safety and watched their "steeds" sink slowly from sight.

Area farmers quickly turned out as the news was spread and attempted to help recover anything not completely gone from sight. Miss Harriet Oberlin, a retired educator now living in Orangeville, recalls that her father nearly lost his fine team of horses as they unsuccessfully tried to extricate one of the Auburns-to-be from the mire--all to no avail, sadly. Swamps do a good job of preservation, being so oxygen poor that normal chemical and bacterial change are hindered. It may therefore be reasoned that the automotive treasure trove is still there, waiting. But, if you chose to inspect the area today, beware doing so after a summer torrent. A young driver, within the past 10 years, had an experience similar to the Auburns'.

Auburn Reflections is a sponsored series intended to reflect on the history of Auburn that might have gone unnoticed or forgotten. It is written by H. Stackhouse with the collaboration of S. Ted Walters, retired. Artwork prepared by Brian Walker, DeKalb High School Commercial Art Class.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

NOT ON THE A.C.D. TOUR

The A.C.D. shuttlebus tour stays, of necessity, on the streets of Auburn. Unfortunately, it must thereby miss some very interesting spots and amusing incidents that too are a part of A.C.D. history.

To wit:

1. Stahl's Hill and Kirkpatrick's Hill, and the First Good Hill South of Auburn, wherever it was. Stahl's Hill is on CR 27, perhaps 3 miles north of the city limits. By present standards, it's no great shakes of a hill, although it does have a nasty, blind crest on it that makes you hope oncoming traffic stays on its own side of the road. Kirkpatrick's Hill lies in western Richland Township, just to the north of the old West Richland School on CR 1. It seems to be of a grander design than Stahl's Hill, but either of them served a suitable testing ground for early autos. Gearing was such that the slower the gear, the greater the pulling power. Slowest, and therefore most powerful, would then be the reverse gear. The test? To determine whether your car had real, brute power in the early days (pre-WWI, and perhaps even a bit into the '20's) you drove it up either of these hills in the highest gear possible. Before the War, hardly any car could have navigated the hills in second gear, let alone high. Not just a few of them, faced with the challenge, particularly of Kirkpatrick Hill, turned round in the road and were backed up the hill.

2. The First Good Hill South of Town? It was not intended as a test for the Auburn auto; but it became one, was failed miserably, and caused one of the town fathers (an attorney) to swear off local products. With his brand new Auburn, he set out for Ft. Wayne, presumably, on what would today be Old #427. Came the first good hill, and the Auburn stalled on him--could not negotiate the hill. Nothing is known of the gear chosen or the degree of motoring skill of the attorney, but the tale is that he returned to town in high dudgeon, had the car put up on blocks and never drove it again.

3. A most intriguing swamp. Directly to the north of the town of Blair (St Joe) runs CR #59. It slips north out of St. Joe in a series of successively higher hills that suddenly, two miles north, give way to the Tamarack Bog, as it was known at the turn of the century. The bog was, and is, a proper peril if you slip off the roadway. In the pre-1914 period, it was even moreso.

The author's father spent an entire summer, along with more than a dozen other teamsters, hauling in fill dirt by horse and wagon, attempting to build a causeway across the morass. Miss Harriet Oberlin's father nearly lost his team of horses there, attempting to rescue the Auburn auto chasses that became enmired.

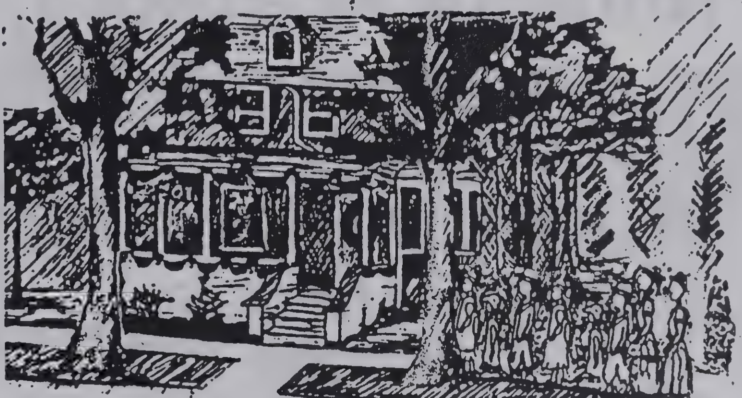
Auburn auto motors and chasses were road tested at times on the county roads. A procession of five or six test chasses turned south off SR 8 onto Road #59, passed over the Wabash RR tracks that border the morass on the northwest, and swept down the hill. In any season of rain, the morass drained almost not at all, and water could easily obscure the roadbed. The testers hit the water, deviated only slightly, and perhaps an many as five of them began sinking in the "sinkhole". No lives were lost, and surrounding farmers turned out to help in the salvage. Mr. Oberlin and his team hitched to one of the vehicles as it slowly sank into the mire, and had then nearly foundered (the equine equivalent of choking) before he could get them unhitched. The chassis and motor continued its downward progress to join what must be a fascinating archeological deposit. Consider how well an auto buff would like to "fish" that sinkhole.

A similarly dramatic loss of a shiny sports car occurred within the past decade, and the insurance company refused to pay until the young owner managed, with wrecker and weighted grapple, to hook onto his car and "fish" it form the mire.

4. The Ghost of Barney Olfield. No, we don't really have a ghost story for you, but if we did, our ghost would look like Barney O., or like a WWI aviator. He would be wearing leather helmet, leather jacket, and would be a tester of Auburn autos. Eventually, he would marry the beautiful young lady, settle down, have a family, and become one of the town's most prominent merchants. But, that's a bit too romantic and who would believe that? Try it; for he did, he did, he did, and he did.

Auburn Reflections ½

THE CHILDREN'S FAREWELL



On September 30, 1915, the exemplary life of Charles Eckhart ended. His passing was of massive importance to the people of Auburn; few did not know of his gifts of the Library, the Park, the YMCA, and the playground equipment at every Auburn school. Auburn was an "auto" town, and this was "Mr. Automobile" himself. His lying-in-state, in the parlor of his home at 307 N. VanBuren Street, was the most heavily attended in Auburn history.

The illustrious, the prominent, and the average alike would call to pay their respects; but none would so have pleased him as the tribute paid by Auburn children--albeit with a little adult supervision. At the considerable cost of a half-day's operation, every school child, grade 1-12, was marshalled by teacher and marched along the streets of Auburn to pass by the funeral bier. The date was probably October 2nd or 3rd, and the details were impressive. Riley School was fairly close at hand, as were the Harrison and High School. DeSoto School in East Auburn was most distant, with many streets to cross. When the children were assembled, in solemn files they climbed the steps, entered, turned left into the parlor, and shuffled past the bier. Few words would be spoken; eyes would be wide. The duty concluded, they would be ushered back to their schools for what remained of their day.

Did they really appreciate the occasion? Likely not, for they could not know that this would be their town's greatest benefactor.

No other donor has ever approached "Uncle" Charley's seeding of the good life in Auburn, nor has any other received such tribute.

Auburn Reflections is a sponsored series intended to reflect the history of Auburn that might have gone unnoticed or forgotten. It is written by H. Stackhouse with the collaboration of S. Ted Walters, retired. Artwork prepared by Tara McClure and Piper Merrell, DeKalb High School Commercial Art Class.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

Auburn Reflections

A FISHY BUSINESS

COD
FISHING
BUSINESS

Not so long ago, you could go north on Indiana Avenue past Michigan Avenue, and suddenly, catch the scent of fish. Your nose was not playing tricks on you--it was the Davis Fish Company plant.

It dealt in both fresh fish, shipped in ice (good Lake Erie perch, pickerel, white fish--even lake trout) and in salted fish (mostly cod) from the Atlantic fisheries. There must have been quite a market for both types, for the author's uncle also sold fresh fish--delivered to him weekly and distributed from his home on W. 2nd Street.

Salted cod? It could be a delicacy, prepared by a competent cook. It arrived at the plant packed in very large boxes--50 to 100 lbs. each. The workers re-packed it into 1-2-4 lb. wooden containers (pails or boxes); and it was then sold directly to the caller or delivered to store shelves in the area. When the great cook (your mother!) prepared it, she soaked it repeatedly in cold water to leach the preserving salt. After a couple of days of such treatment, it was ready for baking, possibly frying, or for elegant creamed cod. To be sure, modern frozen cod is convenient; but for those who have experienced fresh, frozen, and salted cod, the concensus is that salted cod could hold its own.

There was a modest price paid by those who worked there. They could never fool anyone about their occupation. Observes an older member of one of the town's service clubs, "We always knew when old Fred (the manager) was at club meeting, but we didn't mind anyhow." Perhaps it's like the line from Carousel--"Fish is my favorite perfume!"

Auburn Reflections is a sponsored series intended to reflect the history of Auburn that might have gone unnoticed or forgotten. It is written by H. Stackhouse with the collaboration of S. Ted Walters, retired. Artwork prepared by Nick Mason, DeKalb High School Commercial Art Class.

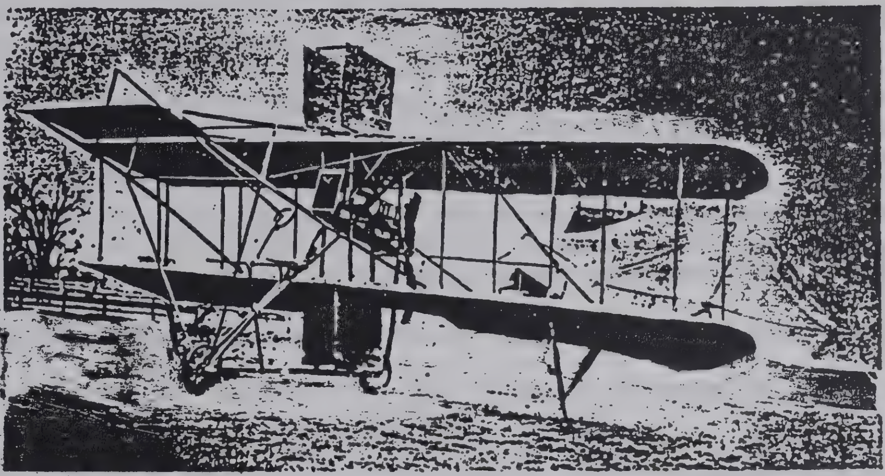
Presented by

McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME

502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

Auburn Reflections '4

ART SMITH LANDS IN AUBURN



Saturday, October 10, 1912--an overcast, un-promising day, was none-the-less the great day when Art Smith, the Ft. Wayne "Bird Boy", would make his announced flying exhibition in and over Auburn. Tickets (25¢) had been printed (courtesy two political candidates and the Victor Joe Cigar Co., owned by his lifelong friend and mechanic, Al Wertman of Auburn).

Art, flying a Curtis-type, pusher bi-plane, would attempt the hair-raising feat of landing it on Auburn Baseball Field (just across Cedar Creek from today's Renaissance Corp. building on Seventh Street). At the appointed hour, the plane appeared overhead, executed its breath-taking loop-the-loops, and--incredibly--settled onto the field.

Two very young men were present who may still tell of the occasion: Willard Maxwell and Ted Walters. Willard's father had taken him--a 6 year old boy--to see the exhibition, and it is he who remembers the weather causing two unsuccessful attempts to get back into the air before a final success.

Young Ted, our collaborator, managed to talk his mother out of the necessary admission fee, ran from his home (just east of DeKalb Memorial Hospital), paid his admission, and gone inside the board-fenced baseball field to TOUCH the plane. Says Ted, "I would have died if I hadn't been able to touch that plane!" The greatest wonder of it all is the landing and take-off from that postage stamp. Given its broad wings and superior airflow of a pusher engine, it is still staggering to consider, here 78 years later.

Look the site over the next time you pass it, and see if you don't agree.

Auburn Reflections is a sponsored series intended to reflect the history of Auburn that might have gone unnoticed or forgotten. It is written by H. Stackhouse with the collaboration of S. Ted Walter, retired.

Presented by

McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME

502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

FLY ME TO THE MOON, INDEED!

(Part 1)

We celebrated, last summer, the 20th anniversary of Neil Armstrong's first step on the surface of the moon. High adventure? Indeed! But in looking for distant heroes and daredevils, we may tend to overlook some locals of a heroic or "devilish" aspect.

Consider the connection of local citizens to aviation pioneer, Art Smith. Mr. Smith flew over and landed in Auburn numerous times, being a friend of the late Al Wertman of 4th Street. Mr. Wertman's home for years featured treasured mementoes, given Smith by the Japanese by whom he was regarded nearly as a god for his early exploits. The wall of Lucille Wertman's home featured a clock, set in the hub of a propeller of one of Smith's planes.

One of the authors can recall begging his mother for a quarter and then running from his home (east of the present location of Dekalb Memorial) to Madden's Field. Not the Madden's Field that is the present Immaculate Conception Church site, but that Madden's Field that lies next to Cedar Creek on 7th Street--WHERE IN 1914, ART SMITH HAD MANAGED TO LAND HIS PUSHER BI-PLANE. It was hidden by a board fence from view of 7th Street, but for a quarter, you could go down into the field and actually touch the miraculous machine. Smith would buzz the town at low level to attract the crowd and then land to collect form the curious. "Impossible to land on such a field," you say? Take away a tree or two to the north, give those chubby wings enough lift, and he could--AND HE DID DO IT!

Other improbable airports? Try the Indiana Avenue "International" just across Indiana Avenue from the old Farm Bureau Mill. From that field, the legendary "Wild Bill" Fitzsimmons took our author on an early flight. The plane had been kept tied down near the Indiana Avenue end of the strip (simply a farmer's field in wheat stubble.)

On the appointed day, our 20-year old author emplaned with Bill. Bill set the necessary controls and then turned the prop himself to start the engine. Once started, he jumped aboard and began taxiing down the strip. Perhaps halfway down the field, the engine stopped. Bill popped out to start the engine again, but did not return to the "starting line". There was considerable doubt in the passenger's mind about survival, but the plane lifted off in time, carried them on a grand circuit around Hamilton Lake, and returned them safely to Auburn.

Any flight with Bill had the makings of an adventure--deliberately at times. Bill was known to climb high and kill the engine, making a dead-engine plunge at the ground. Of course, he re-started the engine in time but on one occasion, our author could not walk immediately after landing for the weak knees that it engendered. On another occasion, he turned his craft on its back on a return flight from Bryan, Ohio, to Waterloo and could not regain effective control for nearly 20 miles. It is, to this day, difficult to say whether it was a matter of supreme confidence in his own abilities, or just a casual regard for safety.

(Part 2)

Not all flight in and around Auburn was powered. In 1932, a local young couple had a fling at glider flying in a craft of their own construction.

Roger and Wanda Grogg, who for more than the past half-century resided in their home-made home on Washington Street in N. Auburn, in 1932 built and flew their own glider. A resourceful couple, to say the least, Roger and Wanda literally made the cement blocks that made their home. Seemingly adept with nearly any substance, they also fashioned the wood and wire and cloth necessary to make the glider that Roger would subsequently pilot.

In the construction, Roger concentrated on the framework and bracing; Wanda took her sewing machine to the construction shed and there sewed the hundreds of yards of unbleached muslin that would cover the wings. And, having sewn and then covered the wings, she then painted the material the sizing agent that shrank the muslin and sealed it against air penetration. Once completed, it was trucked to the Feagler Farm west of Auburn, there to be launched by a cable drawn by an auto.

The Groggs also became adept at powered aircraft, enduring experiences of the hair-raising nature along the way. There is a certain poetic quality in the situation that recently confronted Mrs. Grogg. She worried about the emerging career in aviation of her daughter, as perhaps 50 years ago the daughter might have worried about her mother.

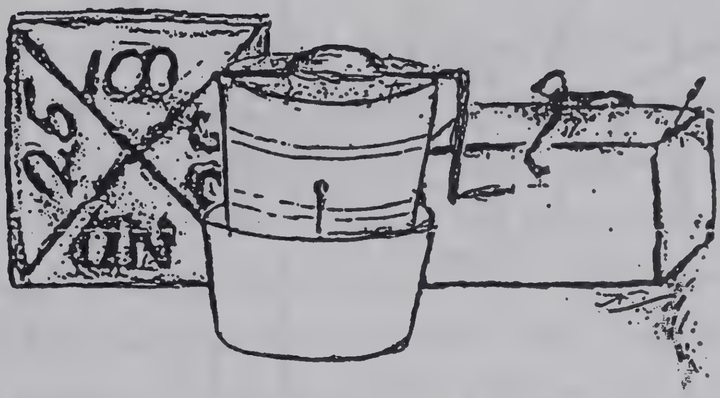
(Part 3)

Bill Fitzsimmons must have had a pair of understanding, if bedeviled parents. Before WWI--before 1910--aviation was "man in the moon" stuff. It was perhaps so new that no one could yet realize the risks involved. Whatever the case, the Wright Brothers were to give an exhibition of their Flyer in Indianapolis in 1904. The teen-aged Bill cajoled his parents (the family lived in Kokomo then) to allow him to attend--and they did. On the grounds of the exhibition, Bill, clad in helmet and aviator gear, slipped past security guards, He got close enough to the machine and expressed such interest that he must have been thrust into paradise when he was asked to assist in the launch of the Flyer. He could help grease the skids. (The Flyer did not roll on wheels down a runway; it swept down a smooth wooden path, (well-greased) on skids. Bill so impressed the Wrights with his ambition that they offered free instruction- if he would occupy them and also work free. Father said no, and he returned home.

As Bill told of the event in later years, we could assume that all went well, and that a life-long love of flying was that day powerfully enforced.

And so, we honored, as we should, the Buckeye who made it to the moon. But, we must remember that he had 25 billion dollars of national treasure in support, as well as tens of thousands of advanced technicians. Our heroes? Thrilling results on a slightly more modest budget, and with limited personnel. Were they really heroes? You can bet your life on it--they did!

1933
THE ICE MAN COMES



The ice truck coursed the streets of Auburn, its driver reading the window placards that announced the household needs. When signalled, the iceman stopped, came to the rear of his truck, and presently liberated the 25 or 50 pound order from the 300 pound monsters made at the Jacob Street ice plant.

Time and practice had given a rough artistry to the iceman's handling of the icepick; but still, with enough juvenile fans watching and waiting and watching, there would be hand-sized fragments remaining. Nothing you may find in 1990 could so assuage the hunger/ thirst of a child as those ice fragments in the hot summer of '33.

Was it sanitary? Plain city water, frozen in open-topped molds, stacked on the floor of the ice vault, delivered in a truck with a rotting-wood floor, and put into our not-too-recently-washed hands? Somehow, the thought never entered our minds! We counted a piece of ice a treasure; and anyhow, we didn't get so much that we were likely to become waterlogged!

Sadly for the romance of the age, someone down the block got a Frigidaire or a mysterious gas-powered Norge–and as times improved, "Keeping up with the Joneses" gradually killed the market for block ice. For a while, we still needed it for making home-made ice cream; but gradually, "sparkling-cube" dispensers began appearing at convenience stores and supermarkets, and eventually, the Jacob Street operation ceased.

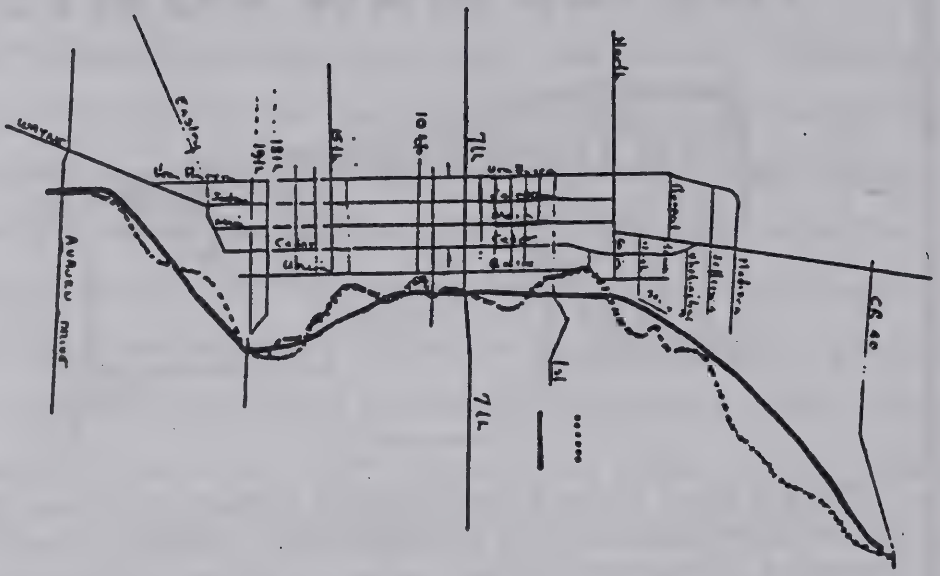
Mark it another win for PROGRESS, another loss for ROMANCE.

Auburn Reflections is a sponsored series intended to reflect the history of Auburn that might have gone unnoticed or forgotten. It is written by H. Stackhouse with the collaboration of S. Ted Walter, retired.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

Auburn Reflections '6

THAR' SHE FLOWS



A few years back, Cedar Creek was given a "haircut" and taught better manners, flood-wise. Very few locals could confirm from personal observation, but this was the second time in this century when our creek had had such treatment.

The first great "public improvement" project of this century was, circa 1900, the dredging and straightening of the creek. From the Waterloo area to well south of Auburn, banks were cleaned and entire loops removed.

The project began with the moving in, piece by piece, of a floating dredge. It was assembled on the creek bank near Waterloo; and with dragline and bucket, it created its own "lake", which it moved southward as it worked. To straighten a loop, it need only dredge in a straight line and deposit the resultant fill in the abandoned streambed.

Bridge problems? Not really, for the dredge simply lifted a bridge off its foundation, dredged under it, and placed it back on its old–or new–foundation when it was past the spot.

Coming into North Auburn near present-day Thomas Park, it moved the streambed from west of the grandstand to its present location, 150 yards east. Smaller bows were taken out in the 10th and 15th Street areas.

The resultant fill along the streambed, temporarily unplanted and workable, tempted one area citizen to propose a "boulevard" along the creek. It was perhaps too visionary, and seems to have been lost in the welter of civic projects just before and during World War I. So...no "Paseo del Creek...".

Auburn Reflections is a sponsored series intended to reflect the history of Auburn that might have gone unnoticed or forgotten. It is written by H. Stackhouse with the collaboration of S. Ted Walter, retired.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

THAR SHE FLOWS!

More than 150 years ago, Wesley Park made a decision that has ever since reached into the pockets of Auburn citizens. Looking for a suitable location for his town, he ignored the higher ground to be found a short distance in any direction and dropped Auburn-to-be in a low spot-swale-swamp-bottom (choice of words is yours!). This fact was borne home some years back when a well-intentioned citizen suggested to the Mayor that we erect a statue to our founder. The mayor, contemplating an expensive sewer project looming on the horizon, expressed himself rather pungently on the subject. Half-a mile north, or west, or south and we'd have been as much as 15' higher, with considerably less vexatious sewer and drainage problems. The solving of those problems has occupied almost every City administration for the past 30 years.

Why put her there? Being close to the Creek was useful for the building of mills in that day. Certainly water transportation didn't figure in it, Cedar Creek being hardly navigable. The location was hardly likely to be cool in summer, warm in winter, or free of pest and disease. A central location on "working" water would seem to make sense. Houlton Settlement, Orange, and Spencerville have the water, but not the location. For whatever reason, "thar she lay".

The Cedar Creek Park saw then differed in a couple of interesting aspects from that of today. His was completely natural and relatively pure. Ours has been altered in its course in several spots, but most noticeably in the Thomas Park area. An 1880 atlas of Dekalb County shows a generous bend to the west, carrying it about 2/3's of the way west toward Cedar Street from the present bed. The map also strongly suggests that it once lapped the bluff that makes spilt-level lots of the 700 block of North Main Street. There is no indication that the course of the Creek was changed to "mid-park" in historic times, but one can be certain that the creek was straightened to the present bed after 1900. The recent cleaning of Cedar Creek was thought to have been the first in 75 years. Research indicates that any cleaning was coincident with the straightening, most likely about 1910. That research also suggests that more than just the Thomas Park loop was corrected. The 1880 Atlas shows the Creek to flow within half-a-short-block of Union at Tenth; a similar distance at Fifteenth and within 200 feet of Center Street at about Seventeenth.

Since the Creek was being cleaned by a floating dredge that literally created its own pond as it went, cutting new, straighter channels was relatively easy. The dredging began in the Waterloo area and proceeded southward well beyond Auburn. The dredge could hew a channel ahead of it as it went, depositing the earth and gravel on either side of it to confine the Creek to the channel chosen for it. Bridges? Simple problem, that. The cleaning was done by dragline, suspended from a massive boom. The boom could be rigged to pick up any bridge it approached, deposit it on the banks, and return it to its proper place after the dredge had passed. It was a proper sidewalk superintendent's dream.

Once the stream was re-channeled, a piece of marginal land would result-boggy farmland or outright swamp. Proper drainage took care of some; and in Auburn, becoming a community dump was the fate of the Thomas Park area. Eventually, Cedar Street would be threaded along the east edge of the swamp. After 30-40 years of dumping activities by Auburn Auto Company, Auburn Foundry, and the citizenry of Auburn---and with a massive amount of fill dirt to give the present arable surface--Thomas Park was ready for its next phase (ultimate destiny, that is!).

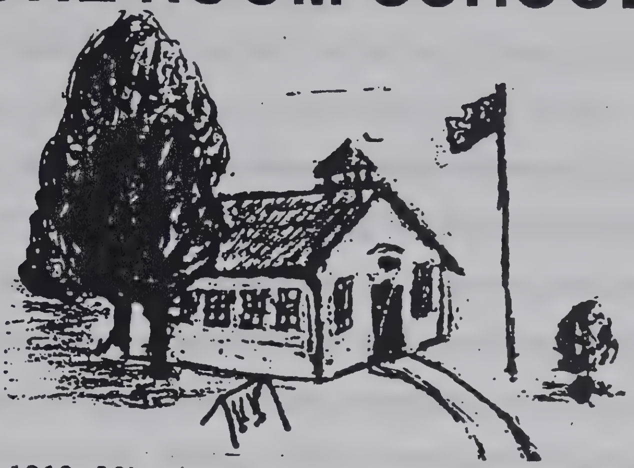
Presented to the City Park Department as a benefice of the Thomas Estate, it became, with the efforts of the Auburn Lions Club and hundreds of other volunteers, Northern Indiana's premier Little League facility. That activity is now in its 38th year.

The addition of tennis courts by the City and playground equipment by the Rieke Foundation, as well as another finished diamond by the Lions, have now about filled all available space there.

As the result of that dredging, and the cleaning project in the mid-'80's, Cedar Creek new flows respectably through Auburn. But a firm tread on the quaking ground of holes #2 and 11 at Greenhurst C.C., or a bit of observation of the "bluffs" behind North Main Street, or and examination of the sub-soil near Union and Fourth will remind you that it was not always so.

Auburn Reflections 17

ANNA and the ONE-ROOM SCHOOL



September, 1919. Miss Anna Maurer of Auburn boarded the streetcar and rode to CR 19. From there, she walked one mile south to Keyser School No.6, and began her career as a teacher. She would have 28 students, ages 5-17, in eight grades--a seven month school year. She would be paid $2.86 per day ($400.00 per year), with an additional $16.00 for a year's janitorial duties, firewood furnished.

She qualified for the position by a record of scholarship, by surviving (as did only two of fourteen candidates) a rigorous county teachers' examination, and by having a goodly supply of gumption (after all, some of her students were less than a year younger than she, and taller!) Presently, she would take a 12 week course at Tri State Normal (Teachers) College, and in later years attain her bachelor's degree by further schooling.

Her employer (trustee) believed in a baptism of fire and assigned young teachers the most challenging schools. Anna would so distinguish herself that parents requested her retention in their school. Her evaluation in those years would be by a single visit (30-60 minutes in length, once a year) by the County Superintendent. In-service training came via once-a-month meetings with Richland and Butler Township teaching staffs.

Her students came from the four square mile area surrounding the school, including Auburn Junction-Keyser. From this latter area, many of them walked to school along the Eel River RR tracks (later called the Vandalia, then the Pennsylvania). Dangerous? Perhaps, but Junction mothers knew the schedules and properly instructed their children.

Interesting incidents? The mandatory paper-wad marathon to cure a miscreant (every teacher's classic!) And...a host of others.

Then, after two years, Anna moved on to the East Richland Schools, where she gave long and excellent service, as well as to the Garrett School system in the final years of her career. She is retired now, winters in Florida,and has the twinkle in her eye and warm chuckle as she recounts, with obvious affection, the children and events of her career...71 years after it all began.

Number 17 in a series of historical sketches by Hubert Stackhouse with S.Ted Walters and other generous contributors.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

THE ONE-ROOM SPLENDORS OF DEKALB COUNTY

As a part of the recent exercises commemorating the 25th Anniversary of Dekalb Central Schools, I was asked to pen a general history of the corporation. Doing research on the subject, I came across yet another testimony to the respect that Americans have for education--the very extensive and effective one-room school "system" that preceded our Age of Consolidation.

Those of us who now drive the county roads note here and there the remains of those sturdy little structures, the one-room country school. Properly they were called the little red schoolhouses, for almost all of them were built of locally-fired red brick. In a few notable cases--Richland East and West, Moores(ville), Butler Twp., Keyser North and East--some had expanded to multi-room structures. Inescapable about them is the quality of the construction, and the impressive number. An examination of the 1880 atlas of Dekalb County shows there to have been ten (10) along the 20.3 mile length of present CR 68; then more along CR 60, seven in the area of CR 52, ten near CR 44, and a similar placement every two miles, striped across the county. Examination of the map suggests that there were not less than 80 individual schools, not counting the town schools of the day.

The reason? Tremendous respect for, and investment in, education. Ours was the first nation to suggest universal education; our land settlement set aside public lands, to be sold and the proceeds used to support education. The proliferation in Dekalb County? It was intended by our forefathers that, since almost all children walked to school, no child have to walk more that one mile to reach his school. In a full township (6x6 miles), it meant placing a school at the crossings of lines drawn 1,3, and 5 miles from each border. It very neatly repeated the "9-block" pattern of Grandma's quilts.

There were not simply structures; they were places of emotion and cherished memory. They had names--Mudsock, Saylor's, Hopewell, Jackson Center, Bear Creek, and 80 more memory-stirrers. They also had their teachers, legendary for their personalities.

In the preparation of this series, I had the good fortune to chat with a teacher of the "one-room" era. Here follow some of her memories.

Mrs. Anna Maurer Surfus, who taught in the beginning in a one-room school, reminisces: "My school was at the junction of present CRs., 19 and 52--Keyser Township School. A lot of my students came from Auburn Junction, and walked the railroad tracks (the Eel River RR line) to get to school. I began in 1919, in the fall after my own graduation from high school. There was no college training; we (14 of us) went to Tri-State Normal College for 12 weeks training, but not immediately.

I taught 28 students in the eight grades, all subjects (about six or eight preparations a grade). Some of the students were mischievous. They had about hazed the previous male teacher out of business. The trustee who hired me believed in giving newcomers the roughest assignment--sort of trial by ordeal. If you survived, he would be expected to give you a better school the next year. One boy was 17 years old and in the 7th grade; his father was keeping him at it until he graduated from common school. He was 17, and I was 18. I went home sometimes wondering if I would last the year, but I did. Then the trustee told me I'd be assigned there again, since the patrons seemed to like me so well.

Our teaching performance was evaluated by the County Superintendent, who came only once and spent between 30 and 60 minutes before rendering his "success grade". We had monthly in-service meetings at the Garrett Library with teachers of the Butler and Richland schools, each teacher in turn leading a monthly meeting from an instruction manual. No extra pay for the meetings, either.

For all of this, I was paid $2.86 per day, with an additional $16.00 per year for janitorial duties, including making and tending the fire. Wood was furnished, but had to be carried from outside the building. School was seven months, with dismissal in April to let the boys help on their farms.

Colorful incidents? Ann cured a paper-wad episode by forcing the miscreant to spend a prolonged period making and shooting paper wads at a target on the chalkboard. When the rubber band broke (to his relief), she recruited a host from his fellow students that he might continue. When paper was exhausted, his fellows lent him more. With the thrill of it gone, she had no more paper-wad episodes.

After two years at this school, she accepted a position in the Garrett schools and said her goodbyes to the one room, little red schoolhouse.

Conditions and rules varied from school to school, and our collaborator, Mr. Walters, was not allowed to enter school until he was fully seven years old (Mrs. Surfus had students as young as five, a very immature five). His teacher was the well-known public figure, Charles Krise, and the school stood at "Carmer's Corners" (CRs. 35 and 40A). Per usual, there were eight grades in the one room, with a "recitation" bench in the front. Ted was a lively lad, and playing at recess one day, he spotted some fine, fresh mud. When Mr. Krise's attention was elsewhere, or so Ted thought, Ted threw a mudball at the chalkboard. Mr. Krise did not hesitate in his reaction. He came directly to Ted's seat and "slapped the daylights" out of the miscreant. Ted remarks that his face was red and swollen the next day.

Ted was employed by Mr. Krise at 25 cents a week to make the fire in the centrally-located woodstove. It was very good money for a lad in 1912. Ted's father was a Civil War veteran with disability pension ($4.00 a month, paid quarterly!) and making ends meet was a challenge. His mother was a celebrated midwife and home doctor, but not for money. With several other, younger children in the family, Ted quit school at 14--a full, man-grown 14--to work and help with family expenses. Earnings were turned over to Mother, and a minimum of spending money was doled back.

School here had also been the 7-8 month variety, but effective teaching must have occurred. Mr. Walter reads considerably, has a lively, enquiring mind, and exhibits a remarkable memory for the more than 80 years he has been an Auburnite.

And the one-room schools today? Only a handful of the buildings remain, the best of them converted to dwellings--Saylors, Bear Creek, and a few more. Some of the slightly larger schools have fared equally well in conversion: Keyser East (apartments), East Richland, Moore's and others. A few buildings shelter farm equipment, but unfortunately, too many receive the fate of Jackson Center School--mouldering to ruin in a copse of trees. Something remarkable has passed.

Auburn Reflections '8

GROUCHO TAKES A BATH IN AUBURN

Auburn Automobile Company stock, that is!

Sadie Marx had tried to teach her boys (Groucho, Chico, Harpo, et al) the pitfalls of the world, and Groucho in particular seemed to reflect the lessons in his sardonic personality. But, however cautious he may have been, he was also a victim of the Crash of 1929; and Auburn Auto, a stock in which he had placed great faith, was the instrument of his injury.

Groucho, like many, had enjoyed buying stocks on a minimal (10%) margin, magnifying his potential for profit. Unfortunately, the potential for catastrophe was just as great. On that fateful day in October of 1929 when the bottom dropped out of the market, his formerly-cheerful broker suddenly demanded immediate 75% margin coverage. Groucho complied under strain; he borrowed on his insurance, borrowed from banks that could or would lend to him, and mortgaged his home. The market plummeted further; and all, including the home, was lost.

Fortunately, his salad days were yet before him. Still to come were the very successful movies and a career in television. He would recover; the memory would linger. Years later, while being conducted through the New York Stock Exchange, he suddenly broke into his nasal-tenor rendition of "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling". Without his prop mustache, he was unrecognized by most, and they tried to shush him. He remarked, "Listen! You hyenas took me for a quarter of a million, and for that I should at least get a song!" He continued unabated to the end of the song.

Number 18 in a series of historical sketches by Hubert L. Stackhouse, with a kind assist from James H. Carper, retired.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

Auburn Reflections '9

WILD BILL STORY NO. 6

No other early aviator could hold a valium (which you'd certainly need) to the legendary "Wild Bill" Fitzsimmons. An invitation to fly with Bill WAS an invitation to hair-raising adventure, his skill and sense of humor being what they were. Our co-author, Ted, had the experience as did a host of others.

Bill's plane was tied down at the "Indiana Avenue International Airport", at the junction of Indiana and North Street -- southwest corner. It was then as it is now -- a rolling farm field.

Ted was seated in the front/rear cockpit. Bill set necessary controls and then turned the prop himself. When the engine caught, he took his seat at the controls and began the take-off run to the west. About half-way down the field, the engine stopped. Bill set the controls, turned the prop. and started again; but he did not return to the starting line. Revving her up mightily, they swept down half a "runway", Ted holding his breath, and took off.

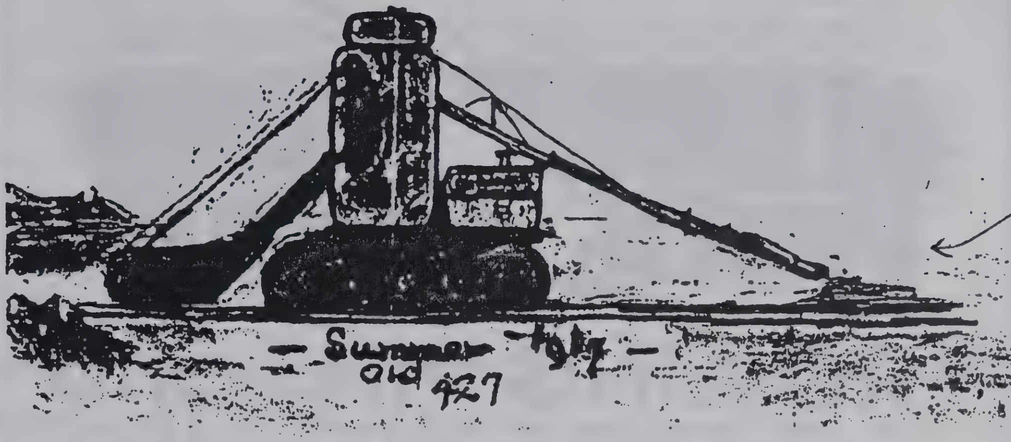
The flight was northward, circled Hamilton Lake, and returned home. On a subsequent flight, Bill "treated" Ted to a Fitzsimmons special, a power-less dive, seemingly managing to start the engine and pull out only at tree-top level. When Ted climbed from the plane on that occasion, he was forced to cling to the side of the plane until his knees solidified.

And Bill? A great smile, a hearty laugh, and an invitation to fly again soon (whenever their sense of adventure [nerve] returned).

Number 19 in a series of historical sketches by Hubert L. Stackhouse and S. Ted Walters.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

Auburn Reflections 20



— Summer 1917 —
Old 427

WHEELS, NOT TRACKS

TED BUILDS THE ROAD

Early summer, 1917. A sturdy 14 year-old was seen on the streeets of Auburn by Peter Shingledecker, road-builder, and hired on the spot to work on the first concrete road to be built in DeKalb County. Ted Walters had begun his 68-year working career.

Ted was hired to operate the on-site cement mixer, a great monster of a machine (for then) that swallowed the windrows of sand and gravel, along with bagged Portland cement, and tediously foot by foot, spewed out the mixed concrete that would pave from CR 36 south to Washington Street (north city limits, then). It would take the full summer, and Ted would not return to school in that or any other fall thereafter.

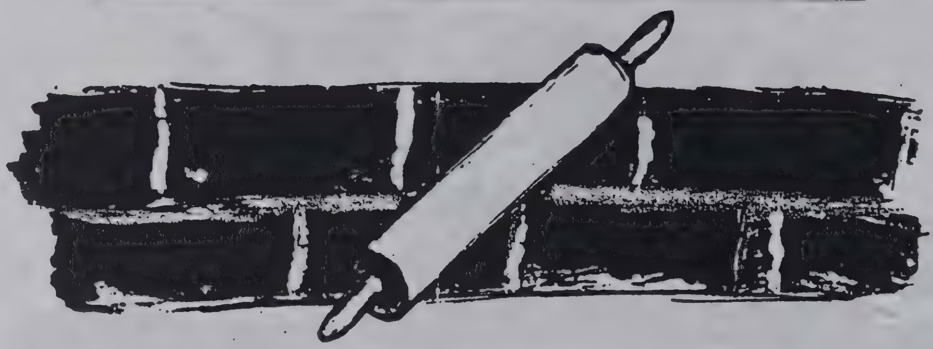
The pay was good: 55 hours a week, 20-30¢ an hour, with NO DEDUCTIONS of any kind. It was delivered in a small brown envelope at noon each Saturday, and went a long way to suport the Walters family, whose father had a disabling wound from the Civil War and $4 per month pension.

The machine was gasoline powered, and with such a massive engine that a larger worker had to start the engine on mornings before Ted could take over it's operation. Impressive work for a 14 year-old? Perhaps, but many took adult jobs at such an age then.

Work was finished in November, and Ted had made such an impression that he was hired to work the following summer on road building in Ohio. The 15 year-old suffered homesickness, and after two weeks, trolleyed back home to a long career of working in Auburn industries and government.

Number 20 in a series of historical sketches by Hubert L. Stackhouse and S. Ted Walters

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918



ROLLING PINS and CEMENT BLOCKS

For two generations the Grogg cement block works stood on North Main Street at Jefferson in Auburn. Here the Grogg brothers turned out a small mountain of fine blocks for hundreds of public buildings and homes in the Tri-State area. Their demand for sand and fine gravel helped empty pits on the Greenhurst Country Club and along Morningstar Road. In later years, son/nephew Roger Grogg would use the location for a welding service, but he could still manufacture some block with the custom-designed (by his father and uncle) machinery that remained.

Perhaps the most exotic activity to take place there occurred when Mrs. Roger (Wanda) Grogg chose to make her own ornamental block for a structure on their property, nearby on Washington Street. This type of block, still visible in several unique Auburn homes, was to be made by coating a flat-faced block with a thin slurry of cement, lowering the prepared face into a wheelbarrow of fine granite chips, and then embedding the chips with some sort of roller. Wanda, not "just a mere slip of a girl", chose to do her own ornamentation on nearly 50 lb. blocks.

Some observers were scandalized that she would attempt such heavy work...and startled when she succeeded so readily. Some must also have been appalled that she ruined her best household rolling pin doing so. Whatever their reaction, she must have done it pretty well. When next you pass that location, look at their house and garage, built of materials processed on the site by a resourceful American girl.

Number 21 in a Series of Historical Sketches by Hubert L. Stackhouse and S. Ted Walters.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

ON HOLES IN THE GROUND AND ROLLING PINS

As a child, it never occurred to me that men would deliberately make holes in the ground, or at least holes that they did no intend to later fill. I had seen the great excavation for the Auburn Post Office, but it was presently filled with many wooden forms, much concrete, and subsequently, an impressive building. I had played as a roving child near the gravel pits before #8 green and #9 tee at Auburn Country Club--indeed, I had seen the Kleeman boy catch a five pound bass fishing with a cane pole, but never did I wonder how or why the pits came to be.

But with time enough the answers fell into place. Every substantial construction project, whether concrete streets and roads; or Court House, Jail, City Hall, YMCA, and Library; or the host of home constructions are consumers of Auburn's gift of the glaciers...a lake of sand and gravel beneath us that gives such a generous supply of water and building material. Wesley Park's choice of town site may have been the pits, drainage-wise; but, it was a bonanza for building materials.

At the end of our present Madison Street in North Auburn lay the Hodge pits, a part of the original Mott Estate. At and just after the turn of the century, they were the principal source of material vital to the maintenance of county gravel roads (which was all of them, at that time). It was then, and remained so for a time, the source of materials for a fascinating Auburn industry, the Grogg (cement) Block Works, located at the junction of Jefferson and Main Streets--actually outside the town limits then.

The Block Works was owned and operated by Isaac Grogg, father of Roger Grogg (who lived on a corner of the original property in a unique house whose blocks were made less than 50 yards form their present location.) A further interesting fact is that Isaac Grogg's great-grandson, Steve Post, now has his accounting firm located in a new building that stands almost precisely where his grandfather's block factory stood. Isaac was not only the wiry, energetic workman that I watched through the doors of his works as a child, but also a talented engineer who designed the tamping mechanism that compacted the damp concrete mix into the form to produce the block.

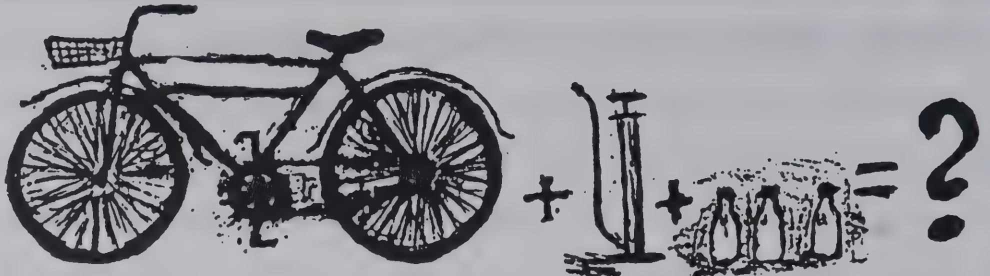
The machine and the process were fascinating to the young, and a proper wonder to the grown. A carefully mixed, slightly-damp mix of sand, gravel, stone, cement, and water were shoveled into the metal "jacket" that would restrain it; placed under the tamper, and subjected to a violent pounding by narrow, wedge-like arms. A check was then made and more material added if need be, followed by placing a flat metal "lid" on the form and subjecting it to a massive "squeeze" from above. Properly dried, it would last--and tens of thousands of them have lasted--for 50 and 60 and 70 years. Properly cared for, they may last that much longer.

A rather fancier type of block was possible, if one cared to take the trouble and expense. The Roger Grogg home is made of such block, faced with small granite chips. It is particularly unique for the fact that the lady of the house, Wanda Grogg, could make them herself. The cured block, considerably heavier than our present "lightweight" blocks, had the desired surface coated with a binding agent. That face of the block was pressed into a wheelbarrow of granite chips, and then returned to its original position and literally rolled--in Wanda's case with her household rolling pin. Mrs. Grogg admits that she ruined her best rolling pin preparing the block for their garage, and she also admitted that she scandalized onlookers who thought that a woman could not handle the heavy blocks, some of which tipped the beam at nearly 50 pounds each. Here and there about the community we find concrete block houses, quite likely Grogg products; and on careful inspection, a few of them are granite faced. Throughout the Tri-State area, hundreds of homes and other buildings, in town and country, have the Grogg blocks in them.

This impressive amount of block demanded a great deal of material, whose principal supplier had been Hodge pit; but following a misunderstanding about a price raise, Isaac turned to Harry Shull, who had impressive land holdings running from Old #427, along the north side of the Morning Star Road, and eastward to present CR #35. Pits were opened on the north side about 1/4 mile east of #427 and run to Cedar Creek, furnishing today some very desirable scenic effects to residents. A smaller area was dredged on the south side near the creek.

Gravel for roads, gravel for concrete road and street construction, immense amounts of fill gravel for the construction of the Library, the Court House, the City Hall, and the YMCA--the period from 1910 to 1920 drew very heavily on the resources. Issac Grogg aged, and the demand for concrete block somewhat lessened. By 1929, the Grogg Works had been converted to a welding shop. By 1986, Roger had retired and the structure could be eventually razed to permit other use of the land. Something special of Auburn's past was gone.

Auburn Reflections 22



OF SOUR MILK and RUBBER BANDS

My older brother had a bicycle in the 30's, and with a wisdom that belied his years, he refused to let me use it. Being seven years his junior, I could not be trusted to handle anything so rare or expensive (Experience now tells me that we could not afford anything either rare or expensive, but why compromise my tale with slavish honesty?).

When, as it inevitably must, the bike got a flat tire, two very startling remedies, both home applied, were available.

The first: take your hand bicycle pump, fill it with milk, and pump the tire full. In warm summer weather, spoilage was quick; clotted sour milk to some extent plugged the hole. How you ever got that noisesome mixture out when you wanted to make a permanent repair, I don't know. I suppose that eventually you just threw away the inner tube and inserted a new one.

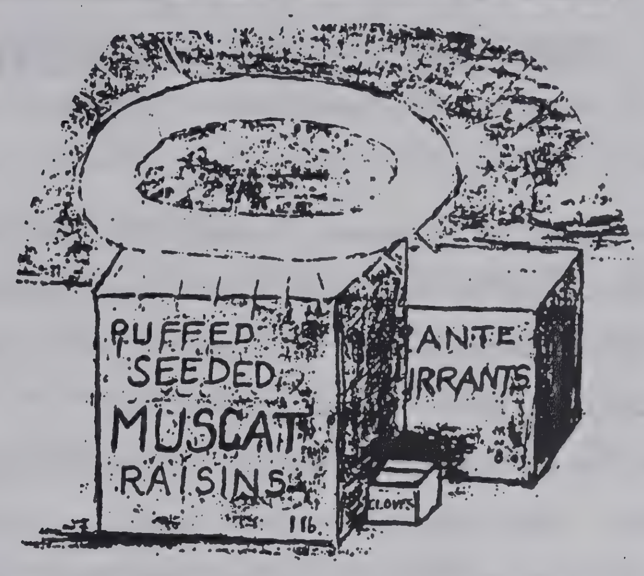
The second: far more spectacular to watch, and likely to be more lasting (and usable only on tubeless tires) was the rubber band treatment. To affect the repair, you used an instrument somewhat like a latchhook, an instrument commonly use in making rugs. You stretched a series of bands along its length on its hooks and augered the device, bands and all, into the puncture. With a proper twist, the bands became disengaged and remained tightly wedged in the hole when the instrument was removed. The tire would contract around the invaders; the rubber bands would try to return to their normal length; it made a rather snug fit. Then, you ignited the rubber bands, which burnt down to the surface of the tire before finally winking out. The heat of the burning rather effectively vulcanized the rubber band plug, and that was that.

Oh, to be sure, you could also repair an inner tube with a coarse grater, rubber cement, and pressure-sensitive rubber patch--or have a local service station do it for you. But, it lacked the bizarre element of the sour milk or the "flaming patch" method, and it required supplies less accessible to the juvenile cyclist.

Number 22 in a Series of Historical Sketches
by Hubert L. Stackhouse and S. Ted Walters

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

Auburn Reflections 23



THE MINCEMEAT CAMPAIGN

Not every year, but in frequent, fortunate years, my mother made mincemeat. It had aspects of a military campaign: an imperious general, trusted aides, and common troops (me). The results were a delicious victory over calorie counting.

Autumn was the season — apples were best then, and cheapest. Apple cider (fresh), and apple jell (boiled-down cider) were in best supply, and the euphoria of a bounteous harvest season allowed even the frugal to accept the cost of the ingredients.

On the given day, Cousin Irene or some other trusted helper answered the call; the varied ingredients had been assembled, the great kettle and the forest of glass cans were clean and ready, and the butcher had done his bit; all was ready.

I, too, had done my part. For weeks in advance, I had been sent a shopping for the sacred "puffed, seeded, Muscat raisins", as well as the Zante currants. Mother would have no truck with "seedless" raisins - seeded only need apply. I had also been sent to shop for apples, probably Cortlands or Spies or Winesaps. Woe betide me if I deviated from her instructions.

The night before, 11 pounds of neck meat (the butcher's "contribution") had been boiled and left in its broth. A more distinguished cut of beef would not do (we had once used round steak and didn't like the results). The broth strained, the ground meat was added back, followed by raisins, currants, old and tart canned fruits (cherries, crushed pineapple), a witch's brew of spices, apple jell and cider, vinegar, brown sugar, and very last, ground apples. It simmered briefly, and then was sealed in scalded cans. It kept as long as five (5) years, and truly was as good at the end as on the day of its making. Brandy? Sure, but the heat rendered it harmless unless applied just before serving on pie or sauce.

Mother was a great cook; she knew it; you were expected to acknowledge it also. It was easy when the subject was mincemeat.

Number 23 in a series of Historical Sketches by
Hubert L. Stackhouse and S. Ted Walters.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

MOTHER MAKES MINCEMEAT

Not every year, but in frequent, fortunate years, Mother would make her mincemeat. It was a production calling for the skills of an army general, of a theatrical "impressario," of a college cheerleader. It was, correspondingly, a moment of peril to the indolent and the modest. The results were more than a peril to the calorie conscious.

Autumn was the season, of necessity. The requisite apples would be cheap then, and in appealing variety. Fresh apple cider would be available. And, the proper mood would be upon the cook, for that is the ending of the canning season--that moment in life when the farm cook seems to think that everything animal, vegetable, and not eaten must be confined to green glass cans in the basement. Mother was a bonafide member of the group--indeed, had gone so far as to make sauerkraut on the back porch (before the EPA began to require an environmental impact statement from sauerkraut makers [Think that's quirky, do you? You haven't smelled sauerkraut in progress then!]).

The affair began with the informing of her henchpersons that on a given date, she'd appreciate their help. Twice can I recall males being allowed to help, but mostly, it was women. Males might be allowed, however, to do menial chores--to bring the enamel canner up from the fruit room, to shop for ingredients (but only with the most explicit instructions: "Only puffed, seeded Muscat raisons would do. None of those suspicious seedless raisins.) The brown sugar must be medium brown, not light and not dark." We could go afield for the apples, but only if we carefully hewed to the instructions as to type.

On that given day, all ingredients assembled and Cousin Irene on hand as her favored helper, assembly of the batch began. Actual preparation had begun the night before with the boiling of eleven pounds of neck meat. We once made the product with boiled round of beef, but it wasn't quite the same. The meat was boiled in the enamel canner in about six or eight quarts of water, and then left to stand in the broth over night. In the morning, the meat was removed; and the broth saved, strained, and returned to the canner. The beef was passed through a coarse grinder and returned to the kettle to heat. To it was added the sacred ingredients--the puffed, seed Muscats, and the Zante currents; a witches brew of spices and "sauces"--tar-like apple cider jelly apple cider, vinegar, brown sugar, cloves and cinnamon; and, remarkably; over-aged fruit from the basement, so long as it was basically firm fleshed and tart. Over-aged cherries worked just fine. Peaches or pears did not. Plums had the flavor but perhaps not the consistency (I don't remember ever seeing them used, but their juice-yes.)

But notice, please.....no apples yet. They would cook-up rather quickly, and Mother held that you put in only half the quantity that you would eventually want in your mince-pie, and then put them in only soon enough before taking the brew from the heat that they would be cooked, but hopefully, yet firm. She wouldn't have used an expression like "al dente", but that's the state she hoped for in her apples.

Much tasting accompanied each subsequent addition. Perhaps a bit more of this, then that, then the other. Every batch of mincemeat came to have its own character, like vintage wines. They all start from the same ingredients, obtained the same place, but subtle differences did occur.

Finally, the apples were added, and the wine. Mother's experience with wines and brandies was very limited. I got the impression that if it came in bottles and was free or cheap, it worked. If the wine was added to the hot mincemeat, none of the alcohol could have survived to be canned in. Of course, you could add the wine when you decanted the mincemeat into the pie shell; but in the heat of the oven, it had an equally short tenure. And, at the time of that baking, she preferred to add a large, firm-fleshed apple to bring the mix to the final balance.

The general, the impresario, the cheerleader? She marshalled and ordered her loving troops around imperiously getting things lined up to cook; she invested the process with the drama of a Broadway opening--no small production this; and and she didn't hesitate to solicit your comment and compliments about the results. She was willing to proclaim this the best batch ever. She was a superb cook; she knew it; she expected your acknowledgement of it also.

Final step? Hot washed cans; put it in and seal it; no hot bath required--it kept as much as five years with no more than that. Use it only for special people and special occasions.

And, about two years from this October, let's have at it again.

Auburn Reflections 24

On Summer Kitchens

A number of homes about Auburn may still have one of the vestiges of a bygone day attached to them, the summer kitchen. There was really no great mystery about its function; it kept the heat of summer cooking, frequently done on a coal-burning stove, out of the main house kitchen.

The summer kitchen, because of seasonal use, was not as well equipped or insulated as a regular kitchen. That seasonal use also made it a fine storage for the overflow of the house--particularly if there were no basement to receive such.

Mostly, though, cooking and canning occupied it in the hot, peak canning months. Bushels of tomatoes, peaches, pears and whatever went in, to emerge in cans with bail tops and rubber rings, or later, glass-lined zinc lids with rubber ring. The minimal garbage emerged, to be sent to a provident farmer who fattened his hogs on such. Steam and varied cooking smells greeted any passer-by, the steam the result of the hot-bath canning method. It was laborious, but effective in the hands of a skilled cook. Good cooks prided themselves that their canning, done thus, produced few unsealed cans. These, if they occurred, might be re-processed, or simply used on the table immediately.

We knew the season was winding down when the output became such delectables as "end-of-the-garden" pickles and late-autumn specialties like pear preserves and quince honey.

The "season" over and cooking moved back into the main house, the kitchen might still see some food-preparation duties when meats were brought in for home-smoking. If the unheated kitchen were considered animal-safe, it might then be used to hang the swaddled hams and bacon until table time.

Time has made obsolete its functions (except where the patio barbecue is used), and many kitchens have been torn down. A few have been attached by an umbilical breezeway or if the separation were narrow, it might have been enclosed and given a half-bath, as was ours on 11th Street.

Number 24 in a Series of Historical Sketches by
Hubert L. Stackhouse and S. Ted Walters.

Presented by
McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME
502 N. Main Street, • Auburn, IN
219-925-3918

54.

SET 'EM UP IN THE OTHER ALLEY

The Auburn YMCA, Perry Rodman, Harry Davidson and Calvin Grosscup Sr., John Stage and Walter Allen, Jack Sanders, Barney Cooper, and John Cantwell all share a distinction that has been important to Auburn's participating athletes for, off and on, more than 70 years-- bowling and bowling lanes.

The first recorded lanes were built in the YMCA building, opened in 1916. They were well-removed from the image of the beer hall alleys that most people had. The lanes were just two, placed in a long gallery at ground floor by the north wall, and existed physically until the recent remodeling. It is likely that little actual bowling took place on them after 1930, however. They were, as with all lanes of that time, served by pin boys placing pins on a series of retractable pegs set in the pindeck.

Bowling for non-YMCA members became possible soon thereafter with the construction of lanes in the 100 block of W. 7th Street, variously reported at the present location of Cricket's Tavern or the main-floor offices of Dekalb Central Schools in the Farm Bureau Credit building. If the location is uncertain, Mr. Rodman's luck was worse. His establishment was a combination of card parlor, tobacco source, and bowling alleys. It excited the approbation of local authorities, who had Mr. Rodman arrested for selling tobacco to minors, effectively ending this bowling venture.

Enter the third venture. Built in the Elson-Pfefferl garage (and paint store and sign shop) at the corner of 9th and Jackson, it was the venture of Harry Davidson and Calvin Grosscup Sr. Opened in 1937, it featured six lanes and a modest concourse. It eventually became the sole property of Mr. Davidson, and was destroyed by fire during WWII. The blaze is reported to have been spectacular, being fueled by paint supplies as well as pin-refinishing supplies and the copious wood of the lanes themselves.

Auburn bowlers were cast adrift by the fire, and had to resort to make-shift arrangements at the Butler Lanes, and Hoeffel's Lanes of Garrett until the construction of the lanes in the Gerig Building by Walter Allen and John Stage in 1946. Lanes had risen in number to eight, with a corresponding increase in interest and quality of bowling. These lanes would eventually be sold to Jack Sanders, who managed them there until their removal to a newly constructed establishment on S. Sprott Street.

Each set of lanes naturally had its performance records; that the Sanders lanes on 7th Street would have included Auburn's first perfect (300) game, rolled by a dedicated and deserving bowler, Mr. Arvin (Dutch) Snyder. Mr Snyder barely escaped injury when his admiring son leaped onto the approach to congratulate him after the twelfth strike.

With the moving of the lanes to Sprott Street, they were increased to twelve in numbers and automatic pin spotters installed. The grand opening featured the first ball being thrown by the revered Dr. J. A. Sanders, father of the owner. A strike, naturally. The celebrated Marian Ladewig gave and exhibition against local luminaries, Fisher West and Willis Engle.

These lanes would naturally have their high points, also; none would be more spectacular than the 702 series bowled during City Tournament by Louie Houlton of Butler--the more remarkable because Louie had never bowled a 600 series. With handicap, Mr. Houlton's series tipped the beam at 804--enough to win the singles crown that year, or any other year.

In 1978, Mr. Sanders retired from management and sold his lanes to Barney Cooper. Mr. Cooper subsequently expanded his 12 lanes to the present 18, housed in a new addition to the north side. Appropriately, J. A. Sanders Jr., opened the new addition, as his father had opened the old. No strike. Bowling in Mr. Coopers establishment continued its progress into higher averages and more spectacular performances and is now on a par with some of the better competition in the Ft. Wayne area. At the time of its sale to the present owner, John Cantwell, in 1988, the lanes were accommodating 1400 bowlers in league competition weekly. League play expanded to six and seven nights in alternate weeks.

Every generation of bowlers will have its memories. Some of the author's; the great straight-ball bowlers of Auburn competition--Lee Plattner of Auburn and the fabled Anita Rump of Ft. Wayne (who rolled a 699 series in a tournament at the 7th Street location); the triumph of concentration that was Fisher West's bowling forte; Dr. A. V. Hines energetic 12-game Friday afternoon exercise period; the succession of outstanding women bowlers--Betty Bachtal, Vivian Gerst, and Peg Zehner among 'em; and Auburn High School being evacuated due to a pin-boy generated smoke cloud (by-product of smouldering "Pin-Life" (not by the author).

And, if these memories don't match yours, then, "Set 'em up in the other alley," yourself.

A MASON AND HIS MUD

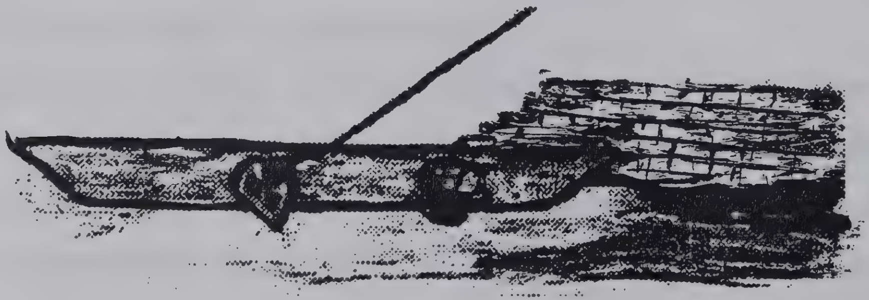
Like a rich frosting, the mason spread his mortar on brick and block, and before our admiring gazes, built structures that will easily outlast us all Exageration? Not so, for there are numerous schoolhouses about our county, brick and 100 years old or more. Every construction project drew its sidewalk superintendents; and they weren't all children, either!

Most impressive to me were the mixing of the mortar, and the wedding of mortar and brick, trowel officiating. Today we watch the mortar mixed by a machine--a mindless steel worm swimming in a sea of gray mud. Then, a boat-like trough had the dry ingredients measured in--sand, gravel, and Portland cement, which were then tediously nibbled and chewed by a large, very sturdy hoe featuring two holes in its blade. At the proper moment, a minimum of water was added, and another, and another--all so very carefully to avoid a thin mortar.

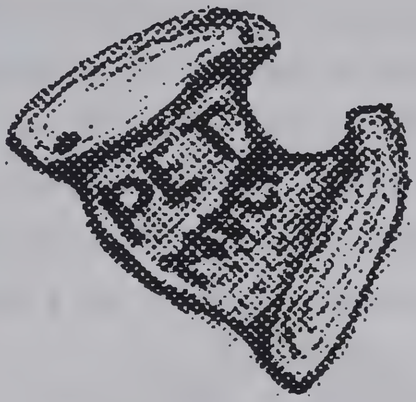
At last at the proper consistency, the mortar was loaded in buckets and carried to the mason. Decanted on his board, it was now reworked by the trowel until it suited the mason. An then...

then , with a practiced flip of the trowel, he cut out a "cruller" of mortar, artfully wiped it off on the edge of a brick, and deposited the brick in a nest of mortar he had previously prepared for it. Using the butt of his trowel, he gently bumped the brick to chalk-line level, and then quickly dressed its exposed end and top to receive the next course.

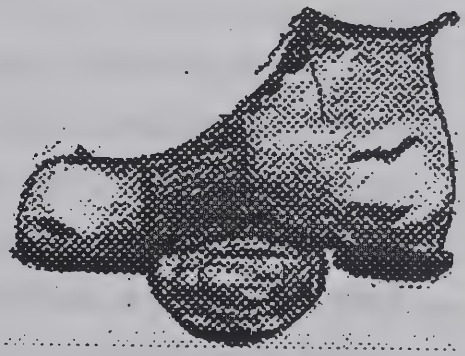
His helper, who likely aspired to being a mason himself one day, mixed the mortar, carried the bricks on a shoulder hod to the working need of several masons, if necessary. Heavy loads and ladders to climb put the high school or college youth in fine trim for fall football, if they were fortunate enough to get a construction job. For the rest of us, it was a great free show.



SOLE SEARCHING



Left on their own, the children of the '30's and their shoes would have quickly parted company in the spring, not to be rejoined until the prospect of autumn and the Misses Doberick, Hawk, Guild, Anthony, Damman, and Reed--and school--loomed again on the horizon. But, there were at least two noteworthy exceptions: Condensed milk seems to have rather more in use then than now, and was typically liberated from the can by punching discrete holes in the lid, rather than opening widely as with solid canned goods. With two of these empty cans and a firm-soled pair of shoes, a very satisfying (to juveniles) set of noise makers could be contrived. Simply stamp firmly with your instep in the side of such a can, and it would bend inward to clasp the sole of its oppressor. This accomplished, we sought the most resonant surface and gave new dimension to the word "clatter." This could continue until metal fatigue or parental tyranny cut short our imitation of a team of horses on a tin roof.

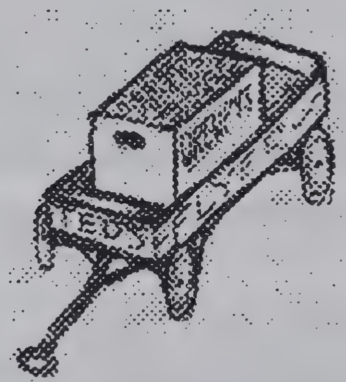


The second use was roller skates. Shoe skates were rare, but usually several on the block had the type of skate that strapped over the ankle and, with an adjustable clamp, gripped the forward shoe sole. They weren't good for shoes, occasionally badly bending and weakening the attachment of the sole to the upper. Oddly, there was a companion problem with this arrangement. It required a special skate key to open and close the "toe clamps," and it seemed to get lost rather easily. Skate length was adjustable by a lockable slide mechanism at the instep, also subject to the skatekey. Lose that key and it took two nearly impossible adjustments with pliers, or whatever, to properly attach your skates. Simply put, "Don't lose that key, and lend it only on blood oath."

THE TROLLEY, THE BREW, AND THE LITTLE RED WAGON

In a long gone age the forces of Prohibition succeeded in drying Auburn up--almost. It was likely due to the efforts of the "Social Purity" group, led by the redoubtable Charles Eckhart.

Local devotees of "John Barleycorn" could find no legal purveyors of their favorite brew in Auburn, and if their needs were to be met, improvise they must. One of the most charming and colorful of the improvisations is that referred to in the title. The cast: a local sand-and-gravel baron, working out of his pits on the east end of Madison Street in North Auburn; a co-operative Garrett tavern owner; courteous, accommodating streetcar motormen; and a downy-cheeked, small businessman named Silas T. Walters.



Modus operandi? The streetcar rumbled down the streets of Garrett, and at the proper moment, stopped briefly before a tavern. The tavernier emerged, carrying a case of his best "gravel-baron's- delight," and placed it in the open door – the baggage section. It was moved out of sight, and the journey resumed. In Auburn, it remained in place until the car reached Madison Street. There, it was met by Silas T. with his coaster wagon. Off-loaded onto the wagon and covered, it was pulled down Madison by the enterprising little tyke and presently delivered to the gravel baron at his equipment barn at street's end. Speedy payment of the drayer's charge, a nickel, concluded the operation.

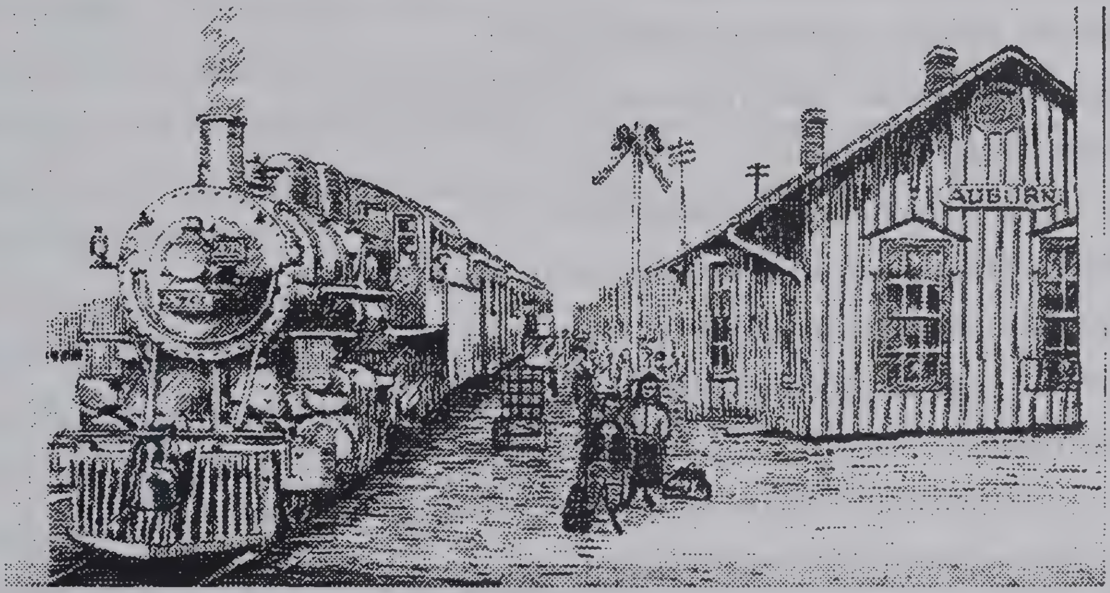
Mother Walters' reaction? Unknown.

Ultimate effect on the tender morals to Silas T.? Minimal, or less.

THE SUNSHINE KIDS

Perhaps you've heard of the celebrated "orphan trains"? Well, they came to Auburn also early in this century.

There existed in Chicago and in a score of small towns an alliance of good people who sought to give the underprivileged children of Chicago--the orphans, the unwanted, the unloved--at least a minimal exposure to healthy rural life. They were characterized by the name of Sunshine Societies.



In early summer, these children, clutching their straw or carpet valises, climbed down from the trains at the B&O in the Junction, or the Lake Shore Line in West Auburn. They would be met by their host families, many of whom did not intend to be more than a summer host to the waifs. To be sure, some hosts did come fully hoping to find a child to assuage their loneliness.

The children were swept away to a summer of fresh air and wholesome small-town values; and in some wonderful cases, the chemistry of love happened. When the end of summer came, the child was not put on the train to be sent back to the ghettoes of Chicago. It was Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables played out in Dekalb County.

Sometimes, town or three summers would be required for the match to be made--foster parent and foster child--but a match would be made, and some to today's fortunate local families may find such a heartwarming incident in their pasts.

And on into a Future. . .

These are titles of articles that could possibly be written.

1. Holes in the Ground *Origin of the Morningstar gravel pits.*
2. Orval and the Tack Hammer *Hijinx at Auburn Auto.*
3. Fog in the Study Hall *Pin boys do a number on old AHS.*
4. Up the C, J and S *Art Smith elopes to Hillsdale*
5. Berneice Wible's Celebrated Recipes
6. Paseo del Creek-O *Auburn's lost "River Walk"*
7. The Best Boss He Ever Met *Ted works for Charlie Romeiser*
8. Saturday Nights on the Square
9. The Swarts' Steam Baths and Massage Parlor
10. The Chef Bakes the Cake *Entertaining ACD bigwigs at the Hotel*
11. The Great Interurban Wreck
12. John P. Marquand and the Auburn CC
13. Gas Town
14. Farewell My Arsenal *The Auburn police attract Dillinger's notice*
15. The Cedar Street Underground Walkway
16. Store-bought Ice Cream *A confection of confectionaries*
17. Wanda and Roger Build Their Glider
18. Cooney Miller Cleans the Outhouse
19. Four More Bill Fitzsimmon Stories
20. Untold ACD Tales *The forbidden legends*
21. The Grand Dames of Auburn *Doctors All-Swarts, Laisure, Hague, Souder*
22. The Rol Muhn Building Era
23. No Fair *The demise of two county fairgrounds*
24. Spangled with Iron *Auburn's railroad history*
25. The Way to Their Hearts *Auburn's memorable restauranteurs*
26. At the Sound of the Bell *Early Fire Department legends*
27. Lemon Juice Every Morning *Miss Armstrong's career*

28. "A Second Chicago" *and other charming tidbits from the 1880 atlas*
29. The Dance Halls
30. Charley Krise and the Mudball *Ted's early school adventures*
31. The Benefactors *Quiet philanthropy in Auburn*
32. One Half Mile - Any Direction *Wesley Park founds a town in a swamp*
33. As Good As They Ever Came *Dave Williams, Athelete par-excellence*
34. Mini-Industries of Auburn's Past *The "Fuzz-Factory" et al.*
35. The Berg Pop Factory *Paradise on Indiana Avenue*
36. Dim Memorials *The Court House display cases*
37. The Onion County Railroad, *or Why Mooresville* ?
38. By the Seat of His Britches *Charlie Romeiser teaches the customer manners*
39. Hands on Their Time *The School Boards, McIntosh, and the Schoolhouse Clock*
40. Old Auburn's Lost Hotels
41. Will Cuppy's Last Bit of Drollery
42. Farewell My Ulna *A tribute to hand-cranked cars*
43. 'Receipts' to Drive You Wild *The "pinch-n-dab" cook at work*
44. The Old Ice Plant on Jacob Street
45. Clamming on the St. Joe River
46. The Legend of 1913 *THE flood of the century*
47. The Great Saturday-Night 25¢ Chicken Supper
48. This is Now, That was When *A map of old Auburn's industries*
49. "Pappy Does It" *Risque tales of Second St.-1928*
50. The Forerunners: Schemmerhorns, Rices, Beidlers, Culbertsons, Wildermuths, Stammans, Van Scyock, Thimlar, Simms, George Moore--the Entrepreneurs of 1910-30
51. Ted's "Industrial Accident", c.1925
52. Forrest Clouse's Ghostly Arrival *An electric car in action*
53. The Heyday of Auburn Junction
54. In Canning Season *Late August in tomato country*
55. Death Comes in Threes? *Juvenile superstitions in 1933*
56. The Thompkins Ice Cream Parlor *Heaven for 12¢ in a waxed paper cup*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is the result of encouragement and underwriting by Mr. Craig Taylor and the firm of McComb-Dilgard-Cline. They asked the author to prepare a series of perhaps 8-10 public service ads, reflecting aspects of Auburn's past that might escape the attention of conventional histories, and thereby, be lost. The instructions were rather general, and so the author wrote some 20 possible articles, in the expectation that a selected 8 or 10 would be used. He was pleasantly surprised to find them all accepted, and a further 4 were also used before the series concluded. Without that generous support, there would not have been enough material produced to merit this collection.

In preparing the series, the author was greatly assisted by the willingness of various sources to share their experiences and observations. First among these was a walking gold mine of material, Mr. Silas Teddy Walters. Little that has happened in Auburn since 1910 has escaped his velcro memory, and he has been willing to share it with the listener with his usual congeniality and refreshing candor. There is not another like Ted.

In preparing individual articles, some "specialists" generously furthered the work. Among them were: Mrs. Anna Maurer Surfus, Eunice Reno, Ernestine Parish, Dr. Paul M. Trausch, Miss Esther Beuret, Wanda and Roger Grogg, Herbert Wertman, Mrs. Allegra Wertman Stackhouse, Hazel Bills Stackhouse, Joyce McIntyre, Harriett Oberlin, Robert L. Wilder, James Carper, John Martin Smith, Dale Rakestraw, and Howard Bates.

As to any others who may have slipped from the author's mind, he extends his apologies to them for the unintended omission.

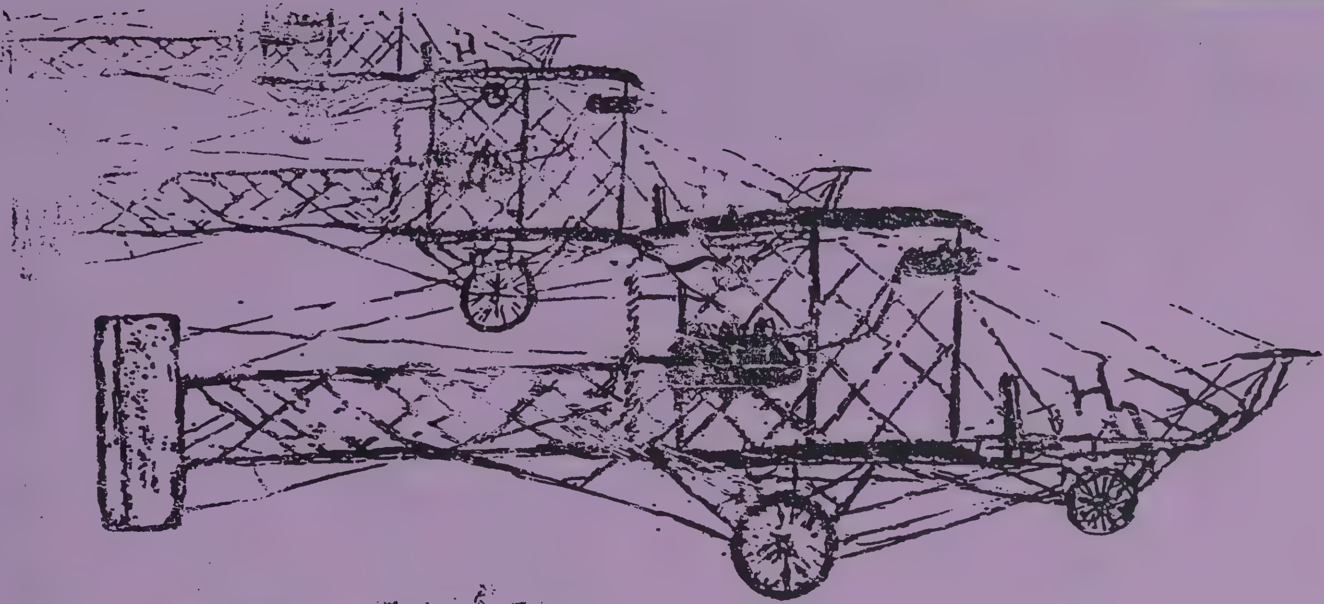
And, without the generosity of Mr. Barry A. Bartels, Mr. Richard Houser of Houser's Accounting and Tax Service, and the Miss Cara Graham of his staff, all would have remained in the leathery , nearly indecipherable first drafts.

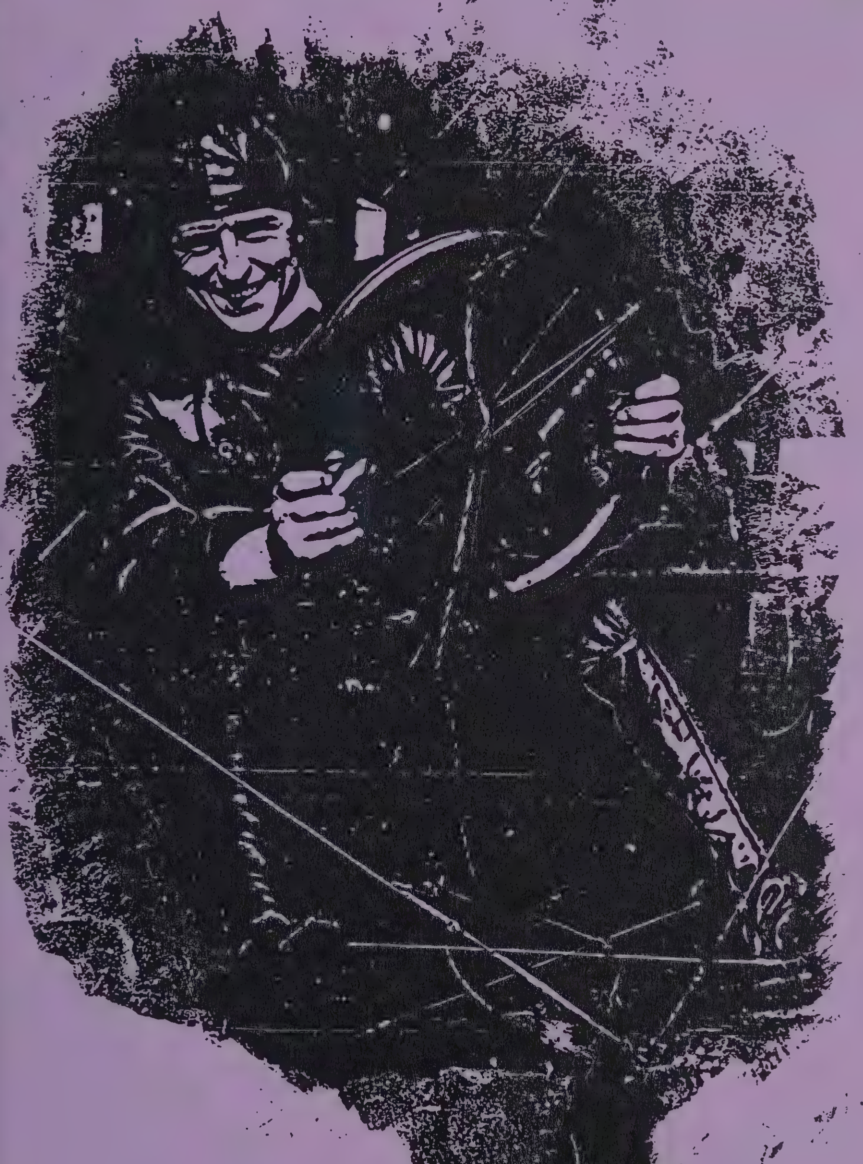
To all who contributed and encouraged, then, my gratitude.

Hubert L. Stackhouse

Hubert L. Stackhouse

c. 1993





A Brief Candle,

the

Bird Boy.

by

Hubert L. Stackhouse

890 1910 1912 **1915** 1916 1923 1926...1990...

CONTENTS

Page

1 Original, Evening Star AD

2 CAVEAT and SOME CONCLUSIONS

5 In re: ART SMITH, "A Brief Candle"

22 Chronology

26 Bibliography

28 1912 Admission Ticket
Postcards of early barnstorming events
Parents 50th Anniversary article

36 Montage, "lovebirds", barnstorming, Japanese tour

37 SF Exposition telegram

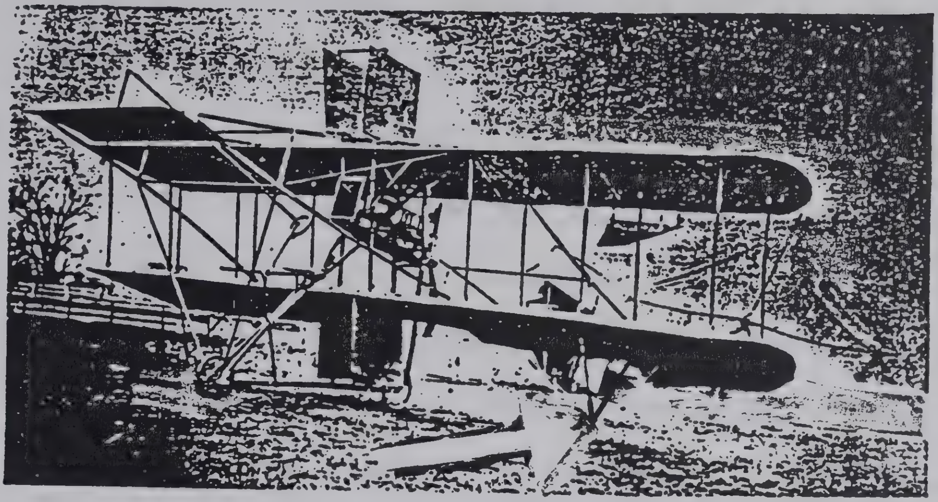
38 The Racing Team

39 Selected clippings, Japanese papers, Ft. Worth Star-Telegram

43 Supportive local commentary, "spin-off" of this work

Auburn Reflections

ART SMITH LANDS IN AUBURN



Saturday, October 10, 1912--an overcast, un-promising day, was none-the-less the great day when Art Smith, the Ft. Wayne "Bird Boy", would make his announced flying exhibition in and over Auburn. Tickets (25¢) had been printed (courtesy two political candidates and the Victor Joe Cigar Co., owned by his lifelong friend and mechanic, Al Wertman of Auburn).

Art, flying a Curtis-type, pusher bi-plane, would attempt the hair-raising feat of landing it on Auburn Baseball Field (just across Cedar Creek from today's Renaissance Corp. building on Seventh Street). At the appointed hour, the plane appeared overhead, executed its breath-taking loop-the-loops, and--incredibly--settled onto the field.

Two very young men were present who may still tell of the occasion: Willard Maxwell and Ted Walters. Willard's father had taken him--a 6 year old boy--to see the exhibition, and it is he who remembers the weather causing two unsuccessful attempts to get back into the air before a final success.

Young Ted, our collaborator, managed to talk his mother out of the necessary admission fee, ran from his home (just east of DeKalb Memorial Hospital), paid his admission, and went inside the board-fenced baseball field to TOUCH the plane. Says Ted, "I would have died if I hadn't been able to touch that plane!" The greatest wonder of it all is the landing and take-off from that postage stamp. Given its broad wings and superior airflow of a pusher engine, it is still staggering to consider, here 78 years later.

Look the site over the next time you pass it, and see if you don't agree.

Auburn Reflections is a sponsored series intended to reflect the history of Auburn that might have gone unnoticed or forgotten. It is written by H. Stackhouse with the collaboration of S. Ted Walter, retired.

Presented by

McCOMB, DILGARD AND CLINE FUNERAL HOME

A CAVEAT or TWO

Reviving a legend is an interesting and provocative experience. The subject, Ft. Wayne's own Bird Boy, Art Smith, was carried to his grave more than 60 years ago; and since that moment, historians have not seemed anxious to document his life. The author did not originally set out to do this either. He was more intent on composing a brief, colorful ad for a public service feature being run in a local newspaper.

Luck favored his effort, although not at first. Few hard sources of information were available; no bound works existed at Allen County Public Library, Eckhart Library in Auburn, or at the Auburn-Cord Duesenberg Museum--all logical sources. Then, through Mrs. Allegra Wertman Stackhouse of Marietta, Ga., and her brother, Mr. Herbert Wertman of Portage, Mich., access was gained to newsclippings, an autobiographical sketch published by the San Francisco Bulletin, and most impressive of all, postcards in Art Smith's own hand, mailed to his friend and mechanic, Al Wertman of Auburn. This works is the result of this "find".

The author is not a historian per se, but neither were any of his predecessors on this particular subject. The conclusions he draws are his own---but he has documentation to support them.

AND THOSE CONCLUSIONS?

Physically, Art Smith was unimpressive. He was short, wiry, and healthy (if the speed and frequency of healing can be used to judge). His salient feature was his glowing smile; which, coupled with his stature, contributed to his boyishness long after his age had disqualified him.

He was not possessed of any notable intellectual gifts. His writing reveals a lack of application of even those rules of spelling and grammar to which he had been exposed before leaving school at a probable 16 or 17. He was, however, nearly ideal for what he chose to do. He was enthusiastic, courageous, and highly motivated---and a natural dare-devil.

Technically, he was not well-founded. He had had little training in mechanics, and according to reliable accounts, relied very strongly on his mechanic, Al Wertman, for improvements in his craft. When he began his barnstorming work, it was an uncle, Edgar E. Johnson, who did most of the assembly-disassembly-maintenance work that supported his flights. Neither of these gentlemen sought the limelight, nor did they seem to object if Art garnered the publicity (although Johnson's daughter did comment pithily on the subject in a newspaper interview some years after the deaths of both her father and Art). When he went farther afield than this back-up crew could follow, he was supported by the Mills Aviators and then the Lincoln Beachey organization to keep him in fine aircraft, well maintained.

But, a consumate showman he was! An artist at puffery he was! He did adapt the Frenchman Pegond's loop-the-loop manouever, but he added aerial fireworks and "smoke writing" to it, and he placed it before a grander audience than ever before--the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915. He there also created a "death spiral". He had earlier staged the first aerial elopement with his beloved Aimee. And through all of these, he cultivated his "prodigy" legend, suggesting his birthdate as 1894. (It actually was February 27, 1890, making him nearly 20 (not nearly 16) for his first flight, 22 at his elopement (not 18), and a final 36 at his death, not 32. But, the public loved the image of a boy-wonder, not contradicted (then) by anyone.)

And what else? A good husband (Aimee had divorced him in a little more than 3 years after the 1912 elopement.)? A loyal son? Yes, for he restored his parents lost home, tried at his first opportunity to get aid for his father (going blind at the time), and shared his Japanese glory with his mother.... But there is the matter of the seeming failure to acknowledge the assistance of "Uncle" Johnson. A good friend? Yes, for his correspondence with Al Wertman, following Al's moving to Auburn, abounds with the "wish you were here" sentiment. His autobiography pays glowing tribute to Al for his invaluable services in the early days, for his loan of Al's last $50....all to "my boyhood chum". (Al and Lucille were chosen to "stand up" with the eloping couple as they were married at 11:00 at night after Al had repaired the "bridal" plane at Huntertown early that afternoon. Al's feat of getting back to Auburn, collecting Lucille, and getting to Hillsdale in time for the service may be a greater accomplishment than Art's flight.) And...Al's last gift was to serve as the first-named pallbearer at Art's funeral service in 1926.

Art Smith seems to have been well selected for the role in life assigned by fate--to perform the charismatic deeds that would popularize aviation. Might he have been another Lindberg (whom he impressed in the mail service); another Wiley Post (whom he drew to a career in aviation through one of his early demonstration flights); another Roscoe Turner? We look at his confident/radiant smile across the chasm of 80 years, and we can believe that he might. A tall tree in an Ohio winter's night ended any chance of this, but if we have a touch of Art's enthusiasm and optimism...why not?

In re: Art Smith

It is no surprise that Auburn should figure modestly in the early history of aviation. The early 1900's saw the development of two exciting facets of American life: the automobile and the airplane. The technology of one would not have been strange to the other; the risks were similar, and the rewards, likewise. What surprise, then, if they attracted the same sort of men. E. L. Cord would use Lycoming engines in his cars; "Wild Bill" Fitizsimmons of aviation fame had an early career delivering auto motor-chassis units and worked momentarily at Auburn Auto Co..chum, Al Wertman, made Auburn his home after the earliest days of experimentation. This last detail would bring Art Smith to, and over, Auburn repeatedly in his 16 year career.

Art Smith was born on February 27, 1890, according to the best of records (including his mother's confirmation of the date.) Some confusion has arisen over the date, due to newspaper articles incorrectly attributing the date to 1894 and Art's own deliberate presentation of himself as a prodigy. This latter date would have made him precocious, indeed. He would then have convinced his parents to mortgage their home ($1,800) to underwrite his design of a plane--at the age of 15. And, this act would have been preceded in time by his discovery and gaining an acquaintance with glider flying, as well as his research into current works on aircraft construction and patent laws. (He was rather careful to avoid the Wright Brothers patents on aircraft, which led to his difficulties with his own first plane--and its subsequent crash.)

His lifelong chum, Al Wertman, was the son of a Ft. Wayne carpenter, Samuel Wertman (Art's father was also a carpenter and a friend.) Al could draw on family skills--surely useful in early plane construction--as well as Art's brief exposure to drafting, which he gained in a brief tenure in the Weatherhogg architectural office. Whatever the source, they had at least some of the required talents, particularly Al Wertman's talents as a mechanic. They had the required funds, as James Smith and wife mortgaged their home to provide.

Construction and testing (in secret, as much as possible, to protect possible patents) was underway in the summer and fall of 1909--less than 6 years after the Wright Brothers!). In that same summer he attended an exhibition flight of the Wright Brothers in Indianapolis. You can patent the devices... but who knows what techniques Art may have learned from that flight to a spectacular 200 feet of altitude!

That fall and winter, the windows of the construction shed were whitewashed--for secrecy. A projected six-week construction period stretched to near six months, Al and Art building and Mother Smith sewing the fabric wing covering. Construction was finished at last on January 17, 1910, 40 days short of Art's 20th birthday. Only $23 in funds remained.

In the dead of night, the machine was moved through the streets of Ft. Wayne to old Driving Park (N. of State, E. of Crescent) for the first flight. Al remained in the tent with the machine, guarding its most sensitive feature, the stabilizer, from premature exposure. What were its salient features? It was a Curtis-type biplaned, 40-horsepower Eldridge engine, two wheels only (mounted bicycle style fore and aft), elongated skids near the ends of the lower wings, hundreds of feet of piano wire, and faith.

It was clear, sunny, and cold that early morning of January 18, 1910. The audience was limited--Father and Mother Smith, sweetheart Aimee, and friends Al Wertman and Will Peters. Al turned the propellor, the engine caught, and with Al and Will holding the wing tips the plane began to roll.

Art later would estimate it reached 50 mph. before leaving the ground. The flight was spectacular, and then catastrophic. The plane nosed up at an alarming angle, and when Art pushed the wheel forward, it nosed down equally alarmingly. Pull the wheel back, and another violent upsweep. The slightest touch downward, and another dive. It was later learned that it actually touched the snowy ground on this second swoop. Barely back into the air again, he touched the wheel down only the slightest, and instantly crashed from a height of 20 feet. Art was thrown clear of the wreck, onto the frozen ground. The plane was a ruin, although the engine survived. Art lay abed, recovering, for five weeks (according to his own account), for six months (the more popular version). Cause? Art's oversized front stabilizers.

With a bulldog tenacity, Art was back at the re-construction by early summer. Some of the original supplies had remained, now to serve as the nucleus of plane two. Funds were very short, and when a renewal of the mortgage was sought, the bank refused. The Smith equity in the home was traded for a couple of small parcels of real estate--no house--Art and his father were permitted to live in the barn while they worked on plane number two (a replica may now be seen at the ACD Museum). Mother went to live with a Cousin Annie in Berne, and beloved Aimee's father ordered her to sever the relationship with the young dreamer who did not have a good job!

Friend Al Wertman offered to quit his job--and did-- to help with the work, as well as pouring in his savings ($50). Art would remark to the listening world (in an autobiographical account published by the San Francisco Bulletin in 1915), ".......I care for him today as deeply as I do for anyone on earth. Every ounce of manly affection I can feel belongs to Al Wertman, for the splendid, unselfish service he gave to me in those days." Al received equal tribute from other A. S. biographers.

Reconstruction must have gone swiftly, for Art tells of repeated test flights during the late summer, each of which taught him a bit more about his machine. One recurring problem, for which he credits Al's solution, was the collapsing wheels (every flight, another flattened wheel). The solution? Abandon conventional tires; use rope and bailing wire to cover the bicycle-like wheel frame.

A Curtis flying exhibition team came to Ft. Wayne that summer, heard of the plane, inspected it, and disparaged its chances of getting into the air, albeit it already had. Art was stung. He put his machine on exhibit; 155 patrons of the airways paid 10¢ each to view--and laugh--at his efforts. (Further stung.) Art acknowledged the need for some more formal training, and taking the $15.50 and friend Al box-car hopping, they went to Chicago--the Chicago School of Aviation. The $350 tuition demanded ended this plan. They viewed planes on exhibit at Hawthorne Race Track and at Cicero Air Field, learned much about their design simply by looking, and returned home, "via rail", within three weeks.

Father Smith mortgaged the lots ($200) for funds to improve the plane, and a busy summer and autumn saw steady improvement on the design. The goal was the Scientific American Prize--an undisclosed sum (now) that would have underwritten all of their expenses. Against a November mortgage deadline, the plane was air-ready in October, the sixth. It was tested repeatedly on the sixth, and a public exhibition was planned for the seventh. A collection was taken from the watchers ($2.50) that was used to buy gas for the thirsty tank, and in a few minutes, Art and mascot (a black kitten named Punk) were in the air. He climbed to 200 feet and turned toward New Haven, the pylon on his projected flight. Barely into his course, silence. The engine stopped, and with some skill and much luck, Art managed to glide to a landing in a field. The problem--a broken coolant line to the radiator had drenched the wiring and kitten. A little solder, a cooperative errand boy, and a dollar loan from beloved Aimee, and he was back in the air. The flight was completed and received a tumultous welcome back at the Circus Grounds (Driving Park).

Again, a mortgage. The authorities readily agreed to let Art give an exhibition on the 21st of October, the mortgage being due in two weeks. All proceeds would be given to Art. Extra streetcars would be laid on to handle the anticipated crowds. They came. The flying weather was not of the best (choppy) but Art went up. After an uncomfortable moment or two in the air, seeking a smoother level, he was forced to land the plane. The entire left wing was demolished in the effort. Heroic repair efforts by Al and Art produced an airworthy craft by the Friday before the Monday mortgage deadline. Despite marginal weather, $300 of fans were in the stands at Driving Park at 2:00 when the flight began. The flight was perilous, culminating in a helpless dive at the ground. At the last moment, the control surfaces bit, Al came out of the potential death dive, and was able to land 200 feet down the field. Sunday came, another flight was made, and $589.50 was realized. On Monday, Art and his father marched into the bank, paid off the mortgage, and in Art's words, "...felt like playing leap-frog over that solemn banker's desk."

He was the hero of Ft. Wayne, and not unnoticed elsewhere. His plan to suspend operations for the winter and to work in Mr. Weatherhogg's architectural firm went by the board, however, when he was contacted by Mills Aviators of Chicago and offered a contract to fly an exhibition at Bay City, Texas, three weeks later: (Four flights for $1350, and he promised Aimee an engagement ring.) The first flight lasted two minutes in the face of a strong wind, with a damaged carriage from the severe landing. Incessant rain wiped out the rest of the schedule, with only $350 advance money realized. On to Bryan, Texas, for the second stop of this first barnstorming tour. The $1200 fee for two flights was not realized--the plane was not airworthy and crashed in a belly-flop on the first flight. He salvaged the engine, shipped it home, and gave the debris to local kids for their glider experiments.

It is now 1911, and a cobbled together version had again crashed on February 1st. Ft. Wayne investors were skeptical. Father Smith stood ready to mortgage again, but at last, Senator Fleming backed him with a luxury--a long term loan. Mills Aviators of Chicago allowed him to use their plant to construct his new plane, and assisted him in getting exhibition bookings. The first was in Stirling, Ill., and in a matter of moments, a strong air current had flipped him over, into the ground and out of the plane. Plane repaired, some weeks later a similar experience with a similar result at Matoon. Same result. It is in the summer of 1911 that he earned his second nickname, "The Smash-em-Up Kid". What he needed, he felt, was a much stronger engine that would not leave him at the mercy of stray puffs of wind. An exhibition at Beresford, Wisc., was expected to solve this problem, but not before a very rattling experience with an enraged crowd at Muncie, Ind., (where management had promised a take-off from a totally inadequate field.) He flew only to preserve his plane from a mob intent on its destruction, and he barely managed to avoid another disastrous landing.

Flying conditions were much better in Beresford--good field, long taxiing length. But, two flights of 15 minutes each were required. The balky engine shortened the first flight to three minutes; the second day's exhibition was also shortened by the engine, but with such hair-raising aerial contortions that the crowd thought at first he had perished in the flight. The management felt that the thrills made up for the brevity, and he was paid $750 in cash. He immediately summoned his father to Chicago to the office of an eye specialist in the hope his father's encroaching blindness might be stopped or reversed. "No hope," they were told.

Seven hundred dollars were used as a down payment on a new engine, installed in the plane for an exhibition at Elkhart, Ind. It flew beautifully, but taxied to a stop miserable (due to the extra power). A fence and the plane paid the price. A second day, a triumph, and then the plane was shipped to Hillsdale, Mich. for two flights. Triumph, with a held-over booking; and then for a "first," he flew this plane to its next booking at Adrian.

An unsung hero of many of these early flights was Art's uncle, a Mr. Edgar E. Johnson. The plane, at least until the Adrian, Mich. booking, had to be dismantled after every engagement, shipped (usually by train) to the next location, and re-assembled. Uncle Edgar did the greater part of this--to little acclaim. His daughter testily commented on this in a newspaper interview in 1956. It is an oddity that Art, so willing to acknowledge the contributions of Al Wertman, should so slight Mr. Johnson.

The Adrian exhibition was a bust--rain for two days. But then, off to Deadwood City, S. D., for a $1250 exhibition. Three flights from some very interesting (hazardous) fields, $1250 in cash, and a gold medal struck from Black Hills gold! The summer (1911) passed in a blur of triumphs, with an ever growing bank account.

Cards sent to his friend, Al, give interesting details of these early barnstorming days of 1911-1912. From 1911, October. "Swell weather today.

Fine flying. Made 21 flights today. 2nd trip down the field went down to Daylors and stopped in soft ground. Rest of trips stopped in meadow. Highest about 100 feet. Looks like payday before long." August 27, 1912 (from Kansas) "Flew in bad winds here 2 out of 3 days. Got $700 of $800. That's the first money we didn't get all of since I seen you last." Next at Trenton, Mo., (Sept. 4-5). "In this picture I flew 5 miles in 3½ minutes and then took 17 to get back. Kansas is no place for us." September 25, 1912, Madison, Wisc., "Had a fine day and I have got their $800. Made two flights. Up 1800 and over the city and spiralled down."

And then, on October 10, 1912, the Art Smith career touched the life of our collaborator, Ted Walters. Art had returned to Ft. Wayne, probably with the most romantic project of his life in mind. But before the classic Art Smith Elopement Drama, the first of two known visits to Auburn the hometown of his beloved mechanic, Al Wertman.

Al of course, had a life of his own, and a living of his own to make. He had moved to Auburn and eventually bought a small business, the Victor Joe Cigar Company. Here, he and his wife-to-be, Lucille, made Victor Joe and National Speaker cigars. They married and settled in a small house at 332 W. 4th Street (still standing), where they would spend their married lives. They would have three children, Allegra, Clifford, and Herbert. Allegra (Mrs. Robert Stackhouse) now resides near a daughter in Marietta, Ga.,; Clifford was lost to leukemia as a child; Herbert resides in Portage, Mich., and has certainly the largest collection of Art Smith memorabilia in existence--particulary postcards, photographs, and news clippings of the great San Francisco Exposition flights and the Japanese experience.

Art would, on October 10th, give an exhibition in Auburn. His plane buzzed the town, looped-the-loop a few times, and then landed on Auburn Baseball Park. Sprightly red lapel tags were printed and sold in advance that announced "I have paid to see Art Smith fly at Auburn, Indiana, Saturday, October 10. (Money refunded if no flight)" On the reverse, they advertised the candidacies of H. O. Williams for County Recorder and John P. Hoff for Sheriff, as well as Victor Joe and National Speaker cigars. Price? Probably 25¢, since that was the gate admission for walk-ins.

On the appointed day, enter one Teddy Walters, 9 years of age. Ted accomplished much when he cajolled his mother out of a quarter, ran the full distance from his home (just east of Dekalb Memorial Hospital), paid at the gate, and got to touch the flying marvel. "I would have died if I had not been able to touch that plane," is his 1990 conclusion.

The crowd looked, touched, and marveled. Art took off, with some difficulty due to inclement weather, buzzed the town, looped another loop or two, and landed again. (It could be repeated as often as it remained productive; but likely it soon exhausted its possibilities.) Art paid his respects to the Wertmans and flew back to Ft. Wayne.

Editorial comment: The next time you pass the spot, there in the shadow of the Renaissance Corp. offices, look carefully. Even with the superior engine, the pusher propellor, the wide wings...isn't that still a rather restricted area--a veritable postage stamp? You bet your life! (And, Art Smith bet his, you may be sure, every time he took to the air in such circumstances.)

Hearts and flowers department: Art knew the value of publicity--of "firsts". Art,in a romance that dated back to childhood, had long courted the beautiful Aimee, but had never won the grudging consent of her parents due to his lack of steady work. He could now support a wife. Marriage! Elopement! By air! Publicity! It certainly was no closely held secret when, on Monday, October 26th, 1912, Art and Aimee "emplaned". It was a one-man craft, and Aimee had to nestle in the wires behind Art with her head against the radiator vanes. They left about noon, followed the Lake Shore Railway Line, and got only to Huntertown when a broken engine valve grounded them. Al Wertman and Bill Fitzsimmons were called to the rescue and had them in the air again by 3:00 PM. They hurtled along the line at an estimated 55 mph., buzzed Auburn as a salute to Al, (even if he wasn't home yet) and flew on.

Railroad telegraphers clacked their progress to the world every 10 miles. A crowd of well-wishers waited for them at Hillsdale, but were treated to the alarming sight of a crash landing in a cornfield, rather short of the intended area. Cause? Engine misfiring and Art's cold-stiffened hands on the controls. With bruises, abrasions, wrenched backs, and momentary unconsciousness, they were carried to a nearby hotel, put in separate rooms, and kept separated despite their concern about each other.

Art and Aimee protested that they should be in the same room; they were to have been married that evening anyhow. Aimee confirmed that she wished to be married; Art was carried to Aimee's room by beloved chum, Al Wertman. The intended minister was lecturing at a suffragette meeting that evening, so a subsititute was recruited, and at 11:00 PM, they were married with Al and Lucille as witnesses. Her parents arrived on the scene, forgave the elopement in their concern about injuries, had Ft. Wayne medical counsel confirm their lack of mortal injury, and all was well. However, before she left town (after a three week recuperation,) Aimee remarked, "I am not the least bit afraid to fly with Art, but do not expect to do so again." (Within 4 years they had divorced.)

A canny promoter, Art realized the saleability of postcards of the elopement. Accordingly, on the day after the wedding, he had a photographer take shots of Aimee and him in their convalescent/marriage bed. The original best man/bridesmaid (Al and Lucille Wertman) were back in Auburn. So---another couple were substituted in the pictures. Lucille particularly felt slighted by the act; but---the pictures sold.

Art's subsequent career as an exhibition flyer drew him further away from Ft. Wayne--and Auburn. His financial success enabled him to re-establish his parents in a home with ten acres of land and supported them in considerable comfort. He was much in demand for barnstorming, first with the Mills Aviators and then, in 1915-16, with the Lincoln Beachey Air Circus. Taking the place of that celebrated pilot at the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition at San Francisco, he became a matinee idol. The memorabilia contains a scrapbook of that summer, with clippings that would indicate that he enjoyed such a summer as few men--or heroes--ever would.

Art had not been the intended performer at San Francisco, but when Lincoln Beachey was killed in a crash, he volunteered to perform. He was on the scene probably in April, and certainly not later than May 23rd, for he sent a telegram (now in the memorabilia) to his friend Al, commenting on his performances. They were received as a sensation at the Panama-Pacific Exposition and given press coverage unlike any prolonged performance since. On July 25th, a columnist for the San Diego Union twitted the adoring San Franciscans for accepting, on blind faith, Art's mistaken assertion that he had seen two sunsets on one of his twilight flights at the Exposition.

The performances were scheduled to end on August 8th, after which he was to be presented with an Exposition medal and given a great ovation. And for what? For a great show, including Art's variation on the loop-the-loop that he had modified, "the falling leaf" effect; for his night fireworks display in which his final act was to use the dazzling flaming phosphorus. Gasping accounts of the day describe part of the act as, "Into the teeth of a 30 mph. gale, he seemed to lose control. His machine tumbled over and over, backward and forward. Twenty-one times he looped the loop." "The crowd gasped. The crowd groaned. He seemed about to meet the fate of Lincoln Beachey (the pilot he replaced)." "Art Smith is the 'King of the Air.'"

On the magnificent summer went. Now there were performances at Huron, Aberdeen, Watertown, Sioux Falls, Butte, Beresford (again), and a dozen more profitable stops planned for August, September, and onward!

But first, that farewell to San Francisco. The Oakland Enquirer caught the piece d' resistance on film, a journalistic first. It shows a night sky, and a descending ribbon of smoke attached to a gnat-like plane finishing the flight at low level over the blazing lights of the Exposition. It was the first successful photo of its kind--a fitting tribute to the best aviator of his kind. A real sense of loss was felt at his departure. The Orville, Co., Mercury would begin its account of his final performances with, "In less than eighty four hours, Art Smith will be but a memory in San Francisco." But, it ended.

Art would manage to squeeze in two flights at San Diego on August 11-12. Then it was quickly off to Des Moines and then Mason City, Iowa, for flights at the State Fair and the North Iowa Fair. Thought not really handsome, Art's engaging smile shines off the pages of countless papers in this era and familiar shots of him at the wheel of his airship were used for advance publicity of his flights. Exactly the same text would be used for most of the annuciatory articles, more than 20 examples beginning, "Art Smith, the most daring.......", another 20 or more beginning, "Art Smith, the boy aviator who is proving...", and a few featuring photos of his planes with mixed text.

Editorial comment: Art was well aware of the value of his seeming to be a prodigy, and deliberately distorted his age by two to five years, depending on the occasion. His mother did, 7 years after his death, set the matter straight. In an article about the Golden Anniversary of her marriage, she remarked, "...if Art were alive, he would be 43." The year was 1933, uncontestably, making his birth year 1890, his solo flight at 20 (in 1910), and his death at 36 (in 1926). But, he had a radiant, boyish smile...a spirit of youthful enthusiasm...and a public that would have believed almost anything.

Not that he couldn't think a serious thought, though. At the conclusion of the Exposition, he was well-quoted in the paper in warning of America's lack of preparedness for aerial warfare--a fact confirmed within a year or two in WWI.

Through page after page of the scrapbook, his late summer and fall of 1915 continue as a lovely, profitable blur. He swept and swooped through the High Plains. By now the San Fransciso Bulletin's printing of Art's account of the first flights and the elopement were a near sell out, at 25¢ a copy. At this time, he also publicly turned down an appeal to join the English and French in Europe--a heady brew, that offer, for it indicated his fame had gone abroad. Certainly it had caught the attention of the Japanese, for no less promient a paper than the Angola, Indiana, Republican reported on August 26th that Art had been offered $10,000 for a series of flights over Japan.

Art's triumphs had not gone unnoticed in Ft. Wayne, and if ever they could get him off the exhibition circuit, they would honor him. The Sentinel reported such an event was in the planning stages and gave its very distinguished planning committee. But, unfortunately, the scrapbook runs out of clippings in late August of 1915. It is not hazardous to guess, however, that he had his moment on the local "chicken-ala-king circuit" that winter, since he usually spent the bad flying months in Ft. Wayne.

Spring, 1916, came, and with it, resumption of exhibition flying until departure for the grand Japanese experience.

Suprisingly (for all his accomplishments in aviation), Art had a companion interest--auto racing. The memorabilia contains numerous shots of Art, posed with and in a small racing car. In one shot, he is posed with drivers with some very recognizable legends on their uniforms: Mercedes, Stutz, Peugeot, and Fiat. It is taken in Japan, and the trove contains a picture of Art in the cockpit of a racer on the deck of his ship to Japan. He displayed skills in his exhibition in Japan of flying, and racing and received the unfailing accolade of the age, in two languages, in the blushingly effusive accounts of his exploits. He continued innovations, which already included the loop-the-loop, with sky writing and night sky writing, adopting another pilot's use of flaming phosphorus (a brilliant white light and an impressive plume of white smoke). He was recruited for a tour of Japan, where he was received by the technology-hungry Japanese as a sort of flying god. The tour climaxed with an exhibition before 2,000,000 Japanese and their Emperor. He returned home (following a tour-interrupting crash in Sapporo) with his mother, who accompanied him, and with healthy finances and a chest full of special medals created for the occasion by the adoring Japanese.

In this era, he became a spokesman for preparedness in the air, warning of the need to upgrade the skills and equipment of our pilots as the European war loomed on the horizon. Indeed, when the United States entered the war, he sought enlistment. He was refused, principally because of injuries he had incurred. It is also possible that his rather short stature placed him below the physical standards. He did receive appointment to test and evaluate, as well as train pilots.

Following the War, with the establishment of the Air Mail Service, he was a natural. True, some modification of the plane did occur to enable him to reach the foot controls, but flew he did.

At this moment, he again comes into contact with Bill Fitzsimmons. Bill was an admirer, and was to make the suggestion for a cockpit cowl, rather akin to that used by a modern, competitive kayak racer, to shut out the bitterly cold air. Coupled with a sort of manifold heater suggested by Bill, Art professed his cockpit to be cozy and warm and claimed to be flying in stocking feet part of the time.

Art had also come into contact with one Charles Augustus Lindberg, who had a brief stint as an airmail pilot. Lindberg was so taken with Art's accomplishments that following his own great moment, on a triumphal tour of the country in 1928, he circled Ft. Wayne as a tribute to Art.

It is after the war that the Smiths moved to Cleveland, Art's airmail route was from Cicero Air Field (Chicago), via a stopover at Air Mail Field at Bryan, Ohio, to conclude at Cleveland. It was logical for his parents, totally dependent on him, to make their home at one end or the other of the route.

Art was flying the Cleveland-Chicago Air Mail route, via Air Mail Field in Bryan, Ohio, in February of 1926 when the crash came that he couldn't survive. The weather was quite cold on February 15th, and it is thought that he encountered icing conditions. In the dark, he apparently mistook car lights around a festive farmhouse for the field lights. When he became aware of his mistake, he attempted a turn and flew into the top of a tall tree. Authorities did not distinguish whether the crash or the subsequent fire was the cause, but Art Smith perished.

A wave of shock spread immediately through the Tri-State and beyond. The Bird Boy--the spirit of adventure in us all--was dead. His mother's reaction was at first bitter and strange--she decreed no funeral services at all, despite quickly made plans of Ft. Wayne to see him properly honored. He would have been quickly interred at Lindenwood Cemetery, but she relented to the extent to allow a Christian Science service. The eulogies were effusive, causing his father to remark, "Now they're trying to make an Abe Lincoln out of him." Foremost among his pallbearers--mentioned first by the Sentinel--was Al Wertman, "his mechanic". Today, soaring monument, capped with a lithe, tallish, Art Smith figure, surmounts the 50 foot column in Lindenwood marking his passing.

Lucky Lindy caught the national--and area fancy the following year, and Art Smith began to slip into legend. An air field in Ft. Wayne was named in his honor. His mother's scrapbooks of the Japanese triumph would one day be enshrined behind glass at Baer Field. A replica of his second plane would be constructed in the 60's, find no home in Ft. Wayne, and end up in the ACD Museum in Auburn. On the 50th anniversary of his death, a few articles (but not many) were published. And, on the 100th anniversary of his birth---nothing.

But, in a box of memorabilia in a home in Portage, Michigan, are perhaps 125 irreplaceable pictures and pictured postcards of his life; as well as clippings of the events of his life, a "sweetheart" autobiography, a telegram he sent to his chum, and a ticket to a 1912 flying exhibition in Auburn, Indiana.

AN ART SMITH CHRONOLOGY

March 17, 1883	Miss Ida Krick, 17, weds James F. Smith, 22, both of Decatur, at Presbyterian Parsonage
1884-1890	Four children are born. Two die in infancy. A third lives 11 years. Only the last child, Art, survives childhood.
February 27, 1890	Art Smith is born.
1896-1909	Art attends McCulloch and Clay Grade Schools, Central High School
1909	Begins working for architectural firm of Mr. Weatherhogg
1909	Acquires Hayward's Practical Aeronautics and Lougheed's Vehicles of the Air to learn aircraft construction. Also aircraft design.
July-September 1909	CONSTRUCTION of first aircraft with majority of construction expertise from Al Wertman.
January 18, 1910	FIRST FLIGHT. Crashes 20 feet due to oversized stabilizer. 98% of capital exhausted. Art recuperates 3-6 months.
April-July 1910	Reconstruction begins with salvaged motor, Al's last $50, and new mortgage ($200 on lots) funds. Mother living in Berne after loss of home on $1800 (first) mortgage.
October 6, 1910	#2 ready for flight
October 21, 1910	Two successful exhibition flights (with one mishap) realize $889.50 to pay off mortgage.

THE YEAR 1911

The EXHIBITION CAREER BEGINS. Mills Aviators of Chicago arrange a series of bookings.

Bay City, Texas	crashed
Bryan, Texas	crashed, only engine salvaged
Stirling, Illinois	crashed
Matoon, Illinois	crashed
Muncie, Indiana	nearly mobbed
Beresford, Wisconsin	$750 success
Elkhart, Indiana	nearly overran landing
Hillsdale, Michigan	success
Adrian, Michigan	rain-out after first transfer of plane by air
Deadwood, South Dakota	three flights, $1,250 and Black Hills gold medal

THE YEAR 1912

ONWARD!

A full season of exhibitions in Kansas, Missouri, Wisconsin, and the Dakotahs

October 10, 1912

The AUBURN EXHIBITION and TEDDY WALTERS TOUCHES THE PLANE

October 26, 1912

The GREAT, ROMANTIC ELOPMENT. Flight at noon, broken valve at Huntertown, repaired by Al Wertman and Bill Fitzsimmons by 3:00, buzzes Auburn, follows Lake Shore Line to Hillsdale, Mich., but crashes before well-wishers waiting. Carried to hotel and married by substitute preacher at 11:00 with Al and Lucille Wertman as witnesses. Recuperation until late November. (Marriage will last about 4 years.)

THE YEAR 1913

BARNSTORMING, CONTINUED

Exhibition at Lawton, Oklahoma, impresses 15 year old Wiley Post to a life in aviation.

THE YEAR 1914

BARNSTORMING III

Second "Auburn" Exhibition

Appearance at Texas State Fair earns $10,000

Association with Lincoln Beachey and his Air Circus lead to greatest break.

PANAMA-PACIFIC EXPOSITION

THE YEAR 1915	Lincoln Beachey killed in crash. Art asks to replace Beachey at San Francisco Panama-Pacific Exposition for four month contract. Art's aerobatics, loop-the-loops, "death spiral", phosphorus fireworks are sensation. April to August 8th.
August, mid-and-late-month	San Diego Exhibition (2 days) Des Moines, Iowa (State Fair) Mason City, Iowa (N. Iowa Fair)
August-September-October	"All of the cities of the plain"--near daily bookings--approximately 50 in 75 days.
August 1915	S. F. Bulletin's printing of Art's Autobiography is a sell-out at 25¢.
1916	THE JAPANESE TRIUMPH — THE DIVORCE
	Booked for a reputed $10,000 to give a series of exhibitions, Art and Mother sail on Siberia Maru with plane, race cars, fellow car drivers.
	Tour includes variety of exhibitions, flying and racing, culminating in performance before Emperor. Tour stops include Imperial Hotel, Mikimoto Pearl Fisheries, Nikko, Formosa, Korea, and Sapporo (where he is injured in crash and cuts tour short).
1917	Back to Japan to complete tour
	Tries to enlist in Army Air Corps, is rejected due to effects of many crashes. Becomes flight instructor, products consultant. Stationed at Langley Field; Fort Worth, Texas, Carruthers Field; and McCook Field (Dayton, Ohio); Wilbur Wright Field, Ohio.
1920	Remains in government employ testing out of McCook Field.
February, 1923	Joins Air Mail Service, pilots Chicago-Cleveland leg with re-fueling stop at Air Mail Field at Bryan, Ohio.
	Comes into brief contact with Charles A. Lindberg, a young pilot.

February 12, 1926	Departs Cicero Air Field, Chicago, in DeHaviland Hawk mail plane. Icing conditions suspected. Mistakes car lights at farmhouse near Montpelier, Ohio, for field lights at Bryan. Making second turn past farm, hits tall tree, crashes, burns.
February 16, 1926 11:50 AM	After emotional refusal, Mother relents and allows graveside services at Lindenwood Cemetery, Ft. Wayne.
ACCOMPLISHMENTS	Invented descending spiral manouever Perfected phosphorus smoke "sky writing" Popularized, glamourized aviation for millions Represented the spirit of youthful adventure for Mid-America

The ART SMITH Sources

A good, if apprehensive friend has shown a certain nervousness about Art Smith materials; and indeed, he has been dead 64 years with no substantial research done on him in that period. Here follows those resources available to me in my pursuit.

NEWSPAPERS: Ft. Wayne Journal Gazette

Feb. 2, 1911 --article on early crash
Feb. 14, 1926--article on death, funeral arr.
Feb. 14, 1926--extensive biographical article
Aug. 7, 1928--article on monument, with Lindbergh "tribute" incident

Ft. Wayne News Sentinel

Mar 18, 1933--parents' 50th Anniversary article (fixing date of Art's birth)
Jan. 22, 1961--article on 50th anny. of first flight
Feb. 14, 1974--article on AS Society construction of replica of SECOND plane
Feb. 15, 1976--article on 50th anny of death
May 15, 1976--resume of career

Japan Advertiser, selected Tokyo English language papers

June 6, 1916--reports of Japanese exhibitions

Ft. Worth Star-Telegram

Dec. 1918--interview and resume', following transfer to Carruthers Field

San Francisco Bulletin	Paperback Autobiography, 1915, "souvenir" of Panama Pacific Exposition
Selected "High Plains" papers	Summer, 1915--the great August-October barnstorming tour--a full large scrapbook of clippings

O X 5 PUBLICATIONS

June 1970--quarterly bulletin--article by Robert McComb, with pictures of Bill Fitzsimmons and Lucille Wertman
Oct. 1970--National Convention Program--articles by Paul Hobrock, Robert McComb, with picture of FIRST (tandem-wheeled) ART SMITH PLANE

ECKHART PUBLIC LIBRARY

810.8	General aviation work, Gilbert
629.12	General aviation work, Taylor, M.
629.13	General aviation work, Hubbell

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

Allegra Wertman Stackhouse	Art Smith memorabilia, visits to Wertman home, 332 W, 4th, Auburn, IN
Willard Maxwell (deceased)	Account of 1912 AS exhibition flight in Auburn
Silas Teddy Walters	Account of 1912 exhibition, personally attended
Roger Grogg	Account of an Auburn exhibition, possibly in 1914

MEMORABILIA

Herbert Wertman collection	125 post cards and photographs, many in the hand of Art Smith, of period from 1911 to 1916 incl.
	Massive scrapbook of clippings for 1915 Panama Pacific Exposition flights, post Exhibition barnstorming tour of High Plains
	Selected loose clippings of Japanese tours of 1916, 1917; interview and article by Ft. Worth Star in 1919
	Admission ticket, 1912 Auburn Exhib.
	Telegram, 1915, from Panama-P. Exhib.
	Clock--inset in stub of propellor of Art Smith's (first?) plane
	OX 5 magazine, ConventionProgram, 1970
	"Larry Massie's Michigan" column from Kalamazoo Gazette, July 23, 1989, nearly 1500 artfully crafted words on the 1912 Elopement

Oct. 23,'911 →

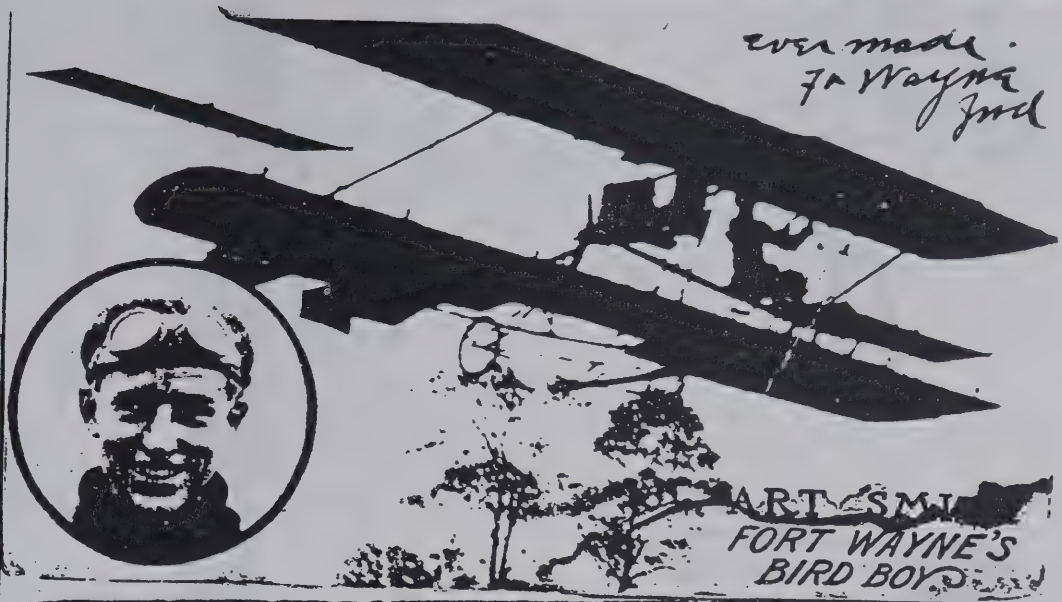
or Oct. 10, 1912 ↓

H. O. WILLIAMS
Candidate for
RECORDER
Will Appreciate Your Support

SMOKE
VICTOR JOE or
NATIONAL SPEAKER
CIGARS
anufactured at Auburn, Indiana

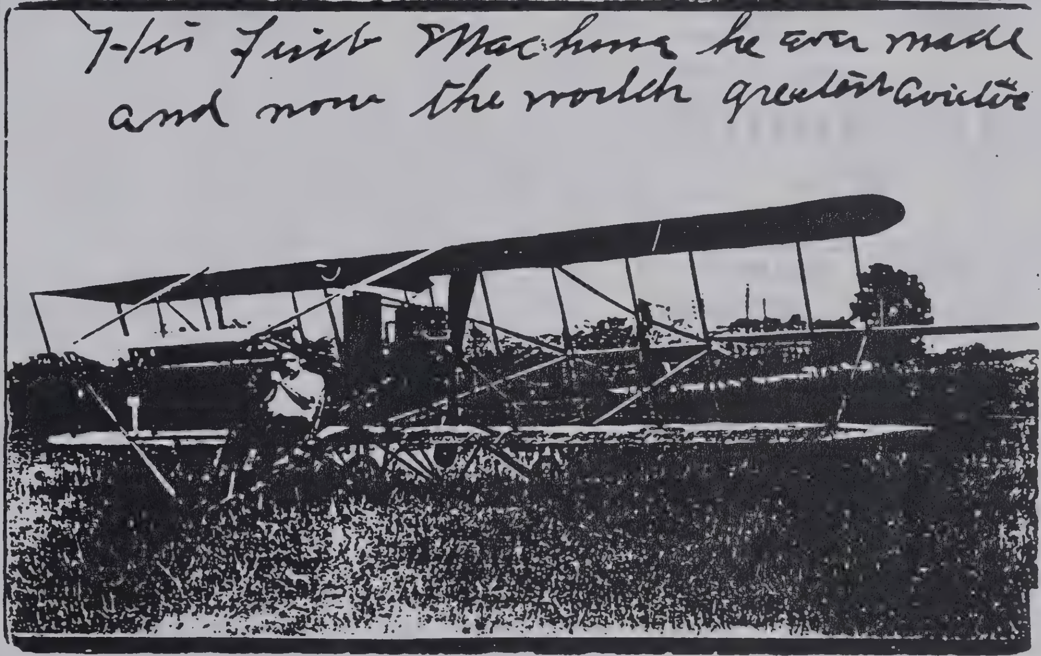
OTE FOR...
JOHN P. HOFF
FOR SHERIFF
DEMOCRATIC TICKET

(slightly enlarged)



ever made.
Ft Wayne
Ind

2



His First Machine he ever made
and now the worlds greatest aviator

October 9 1911

1

On the pages that follow are some of the source materials that were consulted to prepare this work.:

page 28-29 : Lapel tag admitting bearer to Oct. 10, 1912 exhibition in Auburn
Postcards erroneously identifying second plane as "first machine"

pages 30-35: Postcards of barnstorming experiences, 1911-1913, with Art's personal comments to Al Wertman

page 36: Montage of "lovebird" shots, barnstorming, and Japanese tour

page 37: Telegram on San Francisco Panama-Pacific Exposition triumph

page 38: Racing "team", unauthorized car names, on Japanese tour

page 39-42: Newspaper clippings, FW News Sentinel, Japan Advertiser, Fort Worth Star-Telegram

pages 43-45: OX5 Magazine, June 1970 article; and OX5 National Convention Program articles..picture of FIRST PLANE

March 18, 1933 News-Sentinel

E SOCIETY

Birdboy's Parents Married 50 Years

Staff Photo

Mr. and Mrs. James F. Smith.

Mr. and Mrs. James F. Smith, 1611 pring Street, parents of Fort Wayne's Birdboy, Art Smith, who as killed while flying a mail plane ar Montpelier, O., seven years ago, lebrated their golden wedding anniversary at their home here Friday.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith were married years ago on St. Patrick's Day in Presbyterian parsonage in Decatur, eir childhood home. Mrs. Smith as Miss Ida Krick.

"We were just kids," Mrs. Smith id today. "I was 17 and James was After we were married, we went Geneva to spend several days ith my husband's brother. We oved to Fort Wayne in 1890, the me year Art was born. Mr. Smith ok up carpentry work and kept at it until his eyes failed him about enty years ago. Art was schooled … and Clay grade … Just think! He would be 43 years old now if he had lived."

Mr. and Mrs. Smith were the parents of four children, two boys and two girls, all of whom are deceased. Art, the famous air pilot and reputed to be the first person in the United States to do "sky writing," was the youngest of the four children. Two others died in infancy and another died at the age of 11.

In celebration of their golden wedding anniversary Friday, Mr. and Mrs. Smith held a reception for their friends and relatives from 2 to 5 o'clock and from 7 to 9 o'clock.

About forty-five guests were present, including persons from Decatur, Waynedale, Berne and this city. The honored couple were the recipients of a number of beautiful gifts, including two large bouquets of flowers from Decatur and a present from Cleveland. They received a large number of congratulatory greetings

---

I - HAVE PAID

TO SEE

Art Smith Fly.

AT

AUBURN, INDIANA

SATURDAY, OCT. 10

ONE ADMISSION

TO SEE

Art Smith Aeroplane Flight

Oct 10, 1912
actual size,
deep red stock

3

POST CARD

THIS SPACE FOR CORRESPONDENCE

THIS SPACE FOR ADDRESS ONLY

FORT WAYNE
OCT 9
30PM
IND.

Mr. G. Martin
Cincinnati,
O.

Hello Al:
Swell weather today
fine flying. Made 21 flights
to day. 2nd time down the field
went down to Daylors and stoped
in soft ground. Rest of trips
stoped in meadow. Highest about
1000 ft. Look like a payday
for long Art.

Oct 9, 1911

ello Al:
Swell weather today.
ine flying. Made 21 flight
oday. 2nd time down
the field
ent down to Daylors and stoped
n soft ground. Rest of trips
toped in meadow. Highest about
00 ft. Look like a payday
efor long.

Art

2

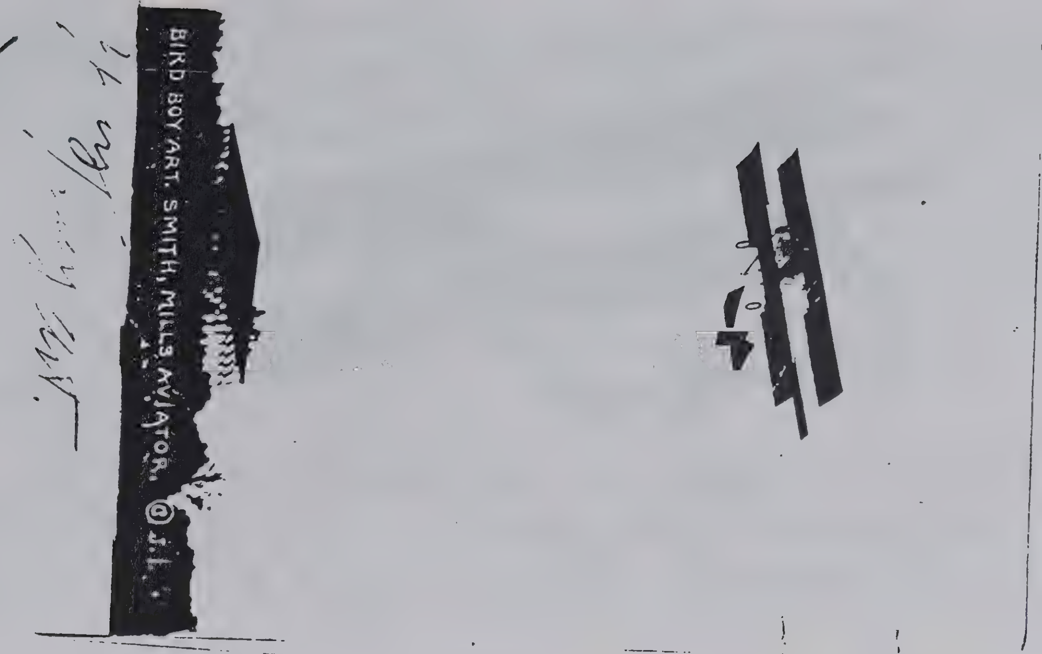
Nothing on reverse of #2
except date of October
29th, 1911

[illegible] not the 1st plane (He
had a tandem landing
gear [illegible] the [illegible]
crash).)

1

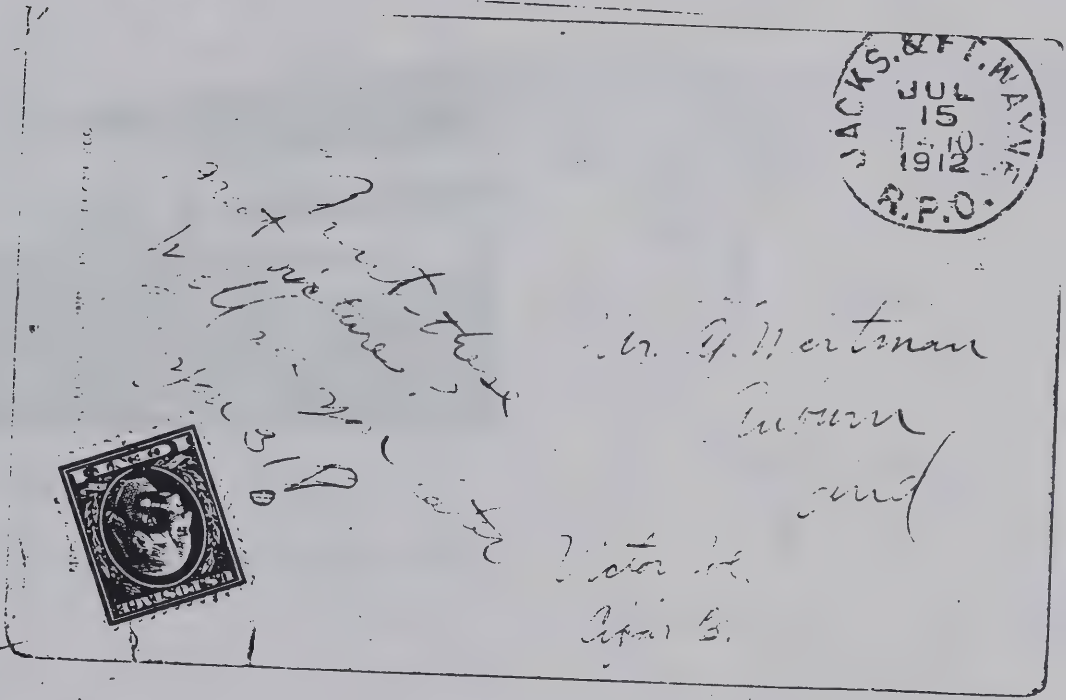
7-15-12

4


BIRD BOY ART. SMITH, MILLS AVIATOR. © J. L.

Aren' these
great pictures?
Will see you later
O you (Al?
31?
???)

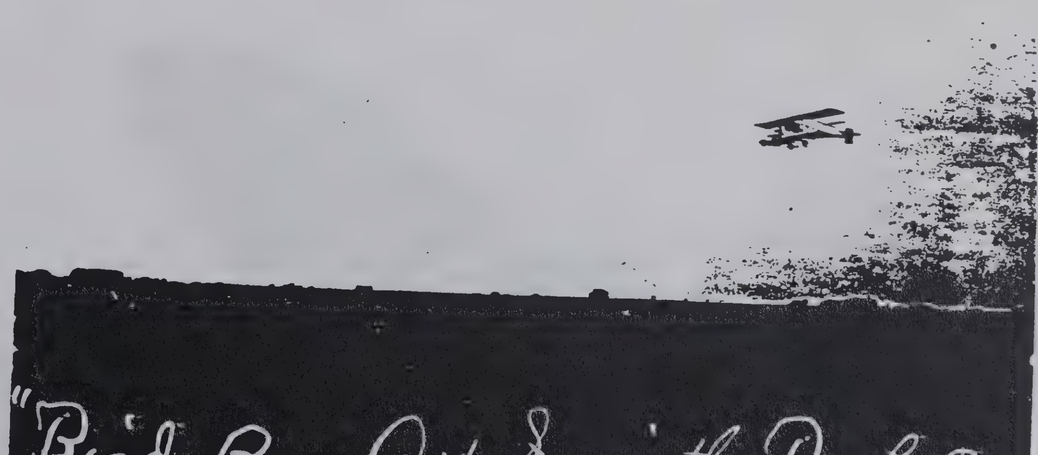
4


JACKS. & FT. WAYNE
JUL 15
1912
R.P.O.

Mr. G. Hartman
Auburn
Ind.

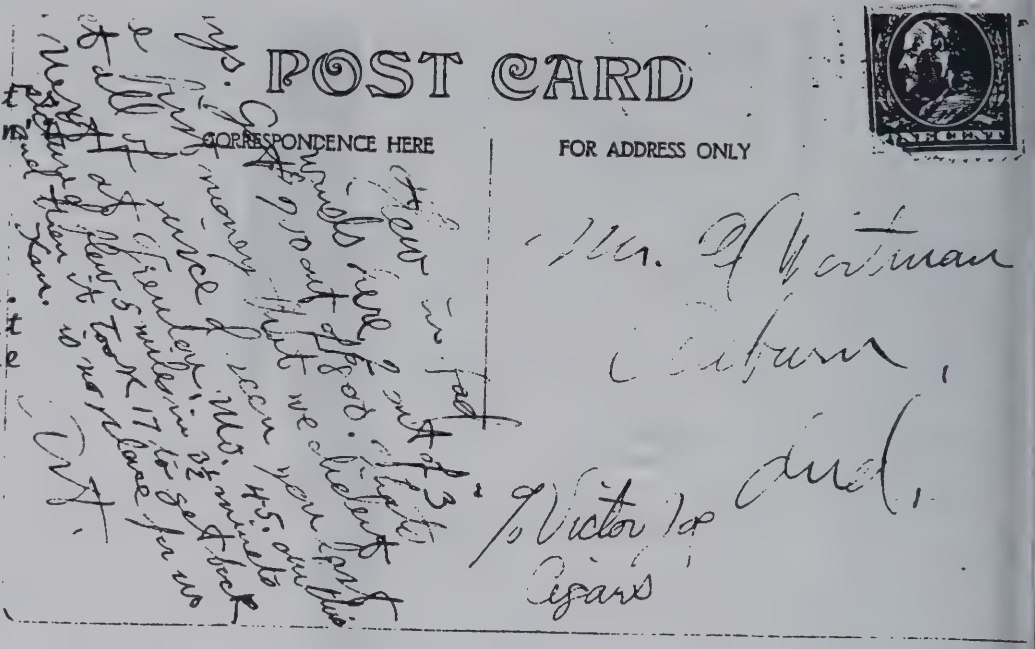
8-27-12

5


"Bird Boy" Art. Smith. Rush Cen
Kans. Aug. 27-1912. Flying in 32
mile Wind.

here 2 out of 3
days. Got $700 out
of $800. That's
the first money we didn't
get all of since I
seen you last. Next
is Trenton, Mo.,
4-5. In this picture
flew 5 miles in 3½ min.
and then took 17 to get
back. Kan. is no place
for us.
Art

5


POST CARD

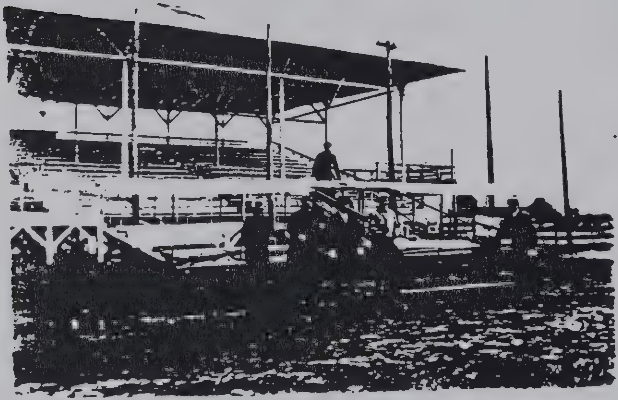
CORRESPONDENCE HERE

flew here 2 out of 3 days. Got $700 out of $800. That's the first money we didn't get all of since I seen you last. Next is Trenton, Mo. 4-5. In this picture flew 5 miles in 3½ minute and then took 17 to get back. Kan. is no place for us.
Art.

FOR ADDRESS ONLY

Mr. A. Wertman
Auburn,
Ind.
% Victor Joe
Cigars

9-25-12



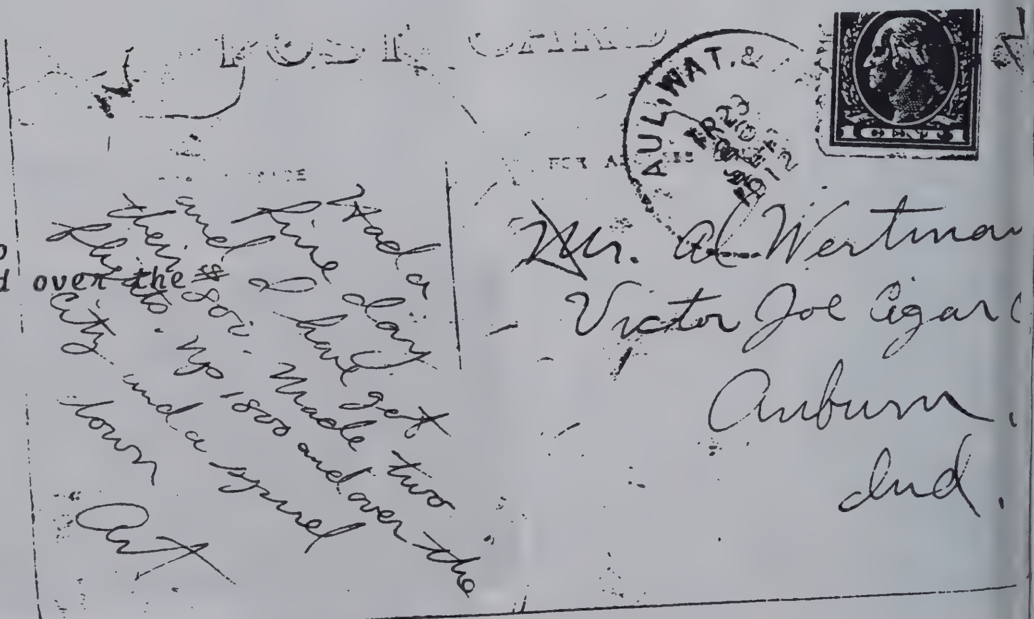
Shoveling the snow off the plane Wensday morning Sept. 25, 1912 Madison, Minn.

6

Had a
fine day
and I have got
their $800. Made two
flights. Up 1800 and over the
city and a spiral
down.

Art

6


POST CARD

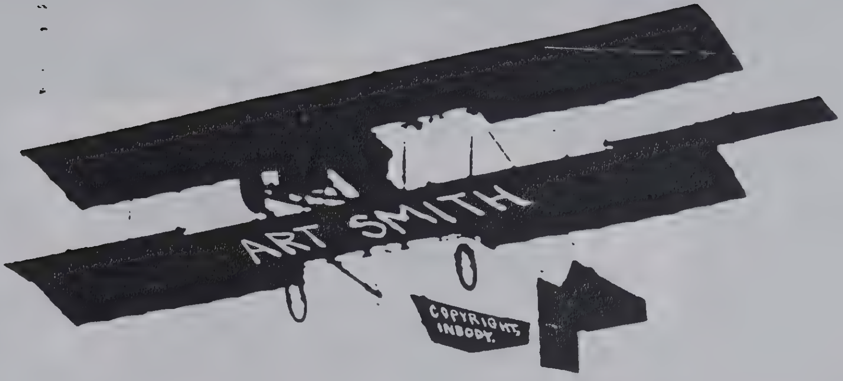
Had a fine day and I have got their $800. Made two flights. Up 1800 and over the city and a spiral down.
Art.

Mr. A. Wertman
Victor Joe Cigar C
Auburn,
Ind.

Oct 14
1912

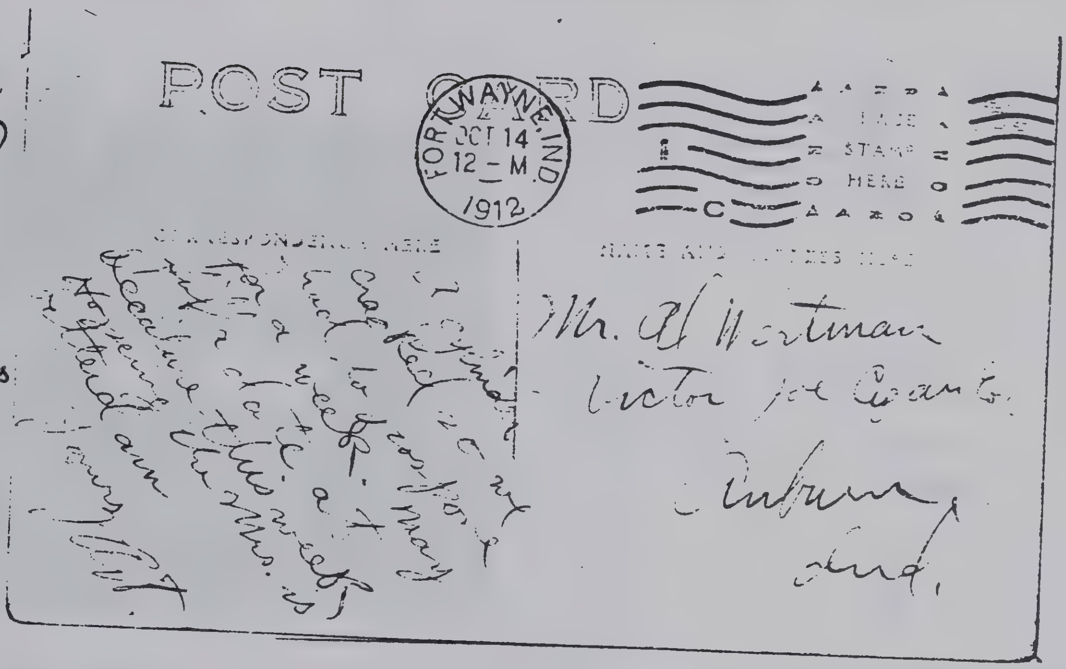
7

Auburn Plane?



Flying in a stiff wind and on this flight made 22 loops

(two days after first Auburn exhibition)


POST CARD

FORT WAYNE, IND. OCT 14 12-M 1912

PLACE STAMP HERE

CORRESPONDENCE HERE

A cylinder cracked so we had to pospone for a week. May fill a date at Decature this week. Hopeing the Mrs. is better. I am yours Art

NAME AND ADDRESS HERE

Mr. Al Hartman
Victor [illegible] Co.
Auburn,
Ind.

A cylinder cracked
so we had to pospone
for a week. May fill
a date at Decature this
week. Hopeing the
Mrs. is better. I am.

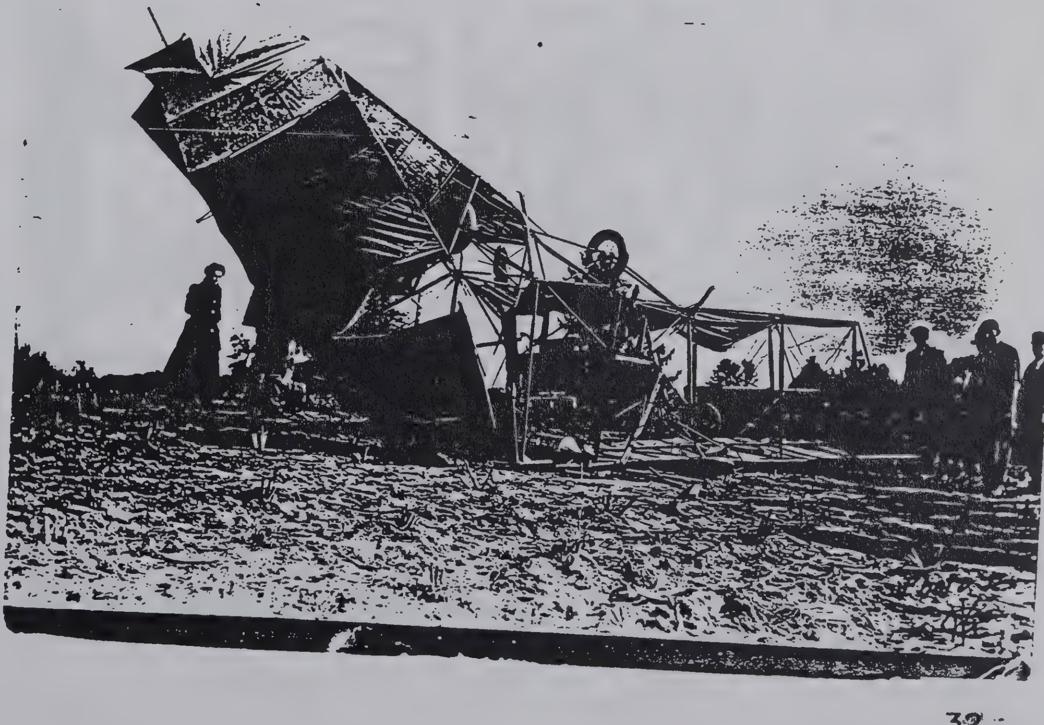
7 Yours
Art

Oct 29,
1912

Hillsdale Mich

8

([illegible])



Dear Mr. Wertman;

I am writing as I said and glad to say that the folks are getting along all right.

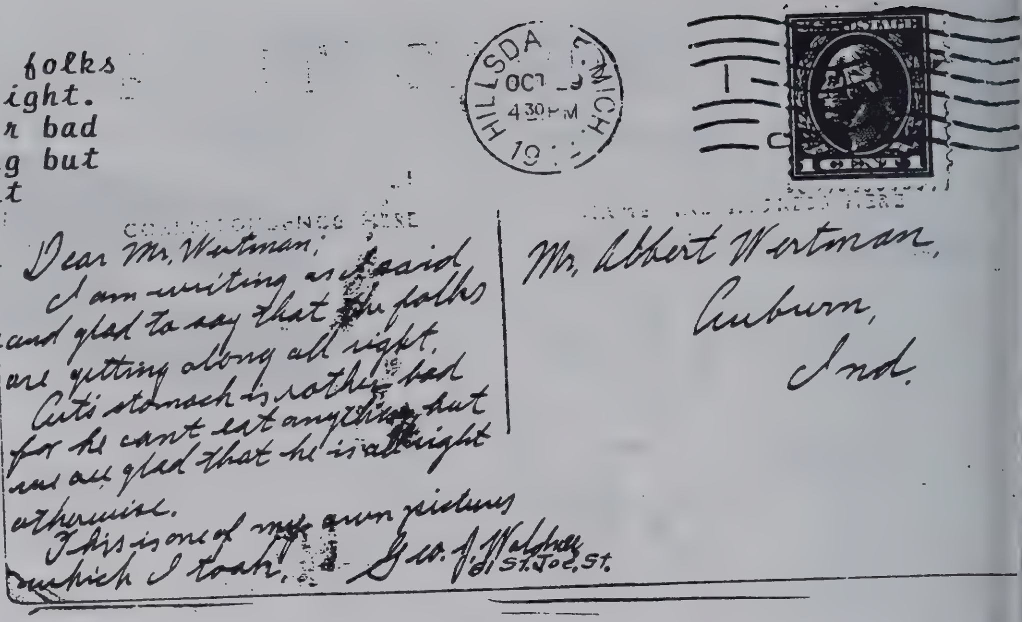
Art's stomach is rather bad for he can't eat anything but we are glad he is alright otherwise.

This is my own picture which I took.

Geo. J. Wolshier
St. Joe St.

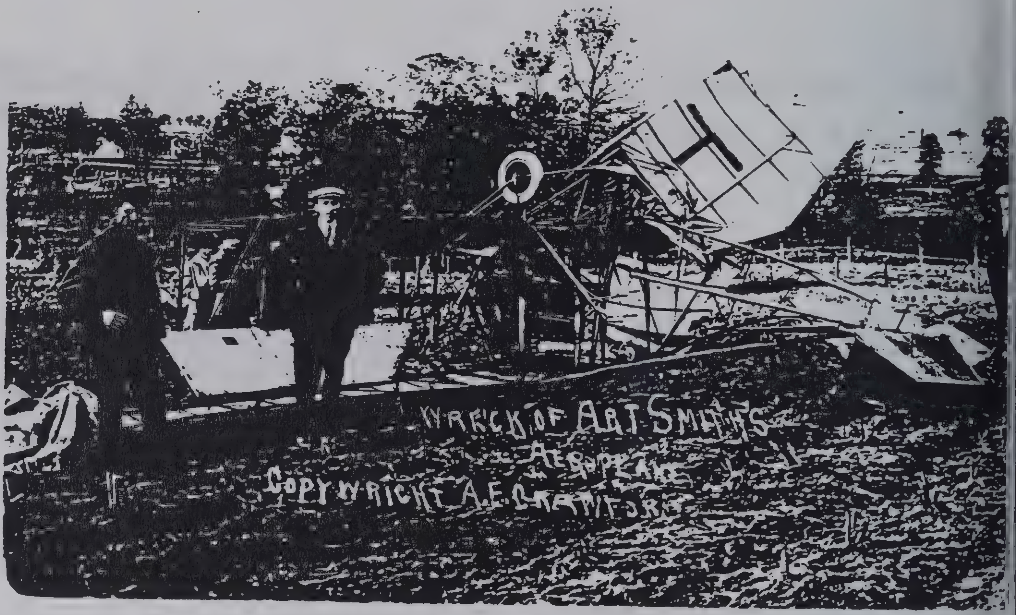
8

(Hillsdale resident reports on Art/Aimee's condition 3 days after crash)


HILLSDALE MICH. OCT 9 4:30PM 1912

Dear Mr. Wertman;
I am writing as I said and glad to say that the folks are getting along all right.
Art's stomach is rather bad for he can't eat anything but we are glad that he is alright otherwise.
This is one of my own pictures which I took.
Geo. J. Wolshier
St. Joe St.

Mr. Albert Wertman,
Auburn,
Ind.



Nov 1912

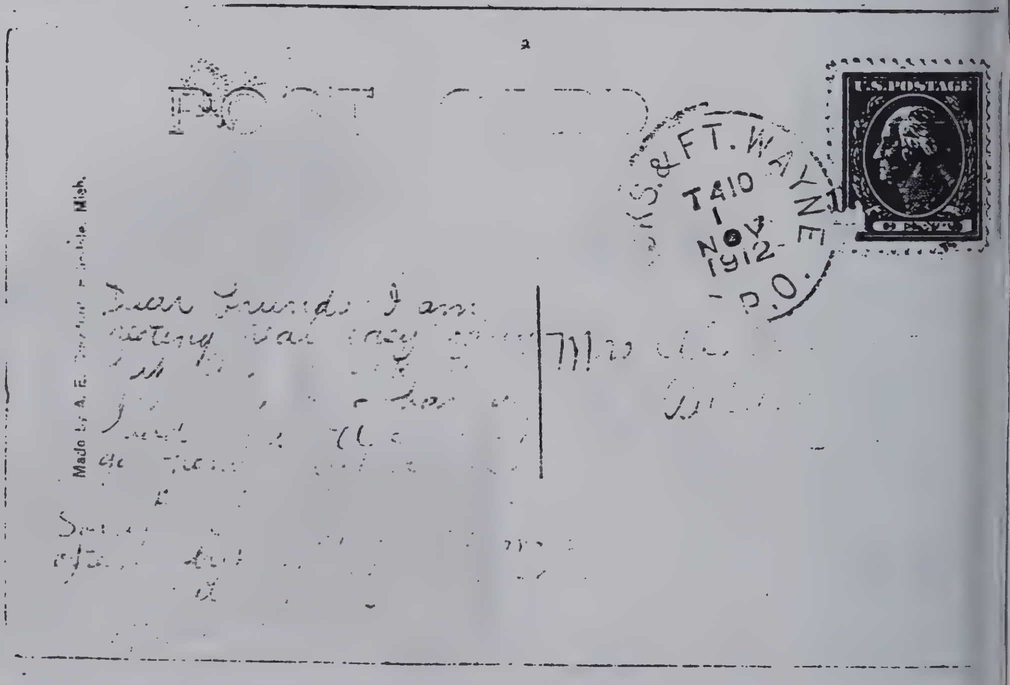
9

Dear Friends: I am resting real easy today but Art is sick to his stomach and has a headache. We want to go home before next week this time.

Sorry we don't write more often, but it is so tiresome.

Write to us.

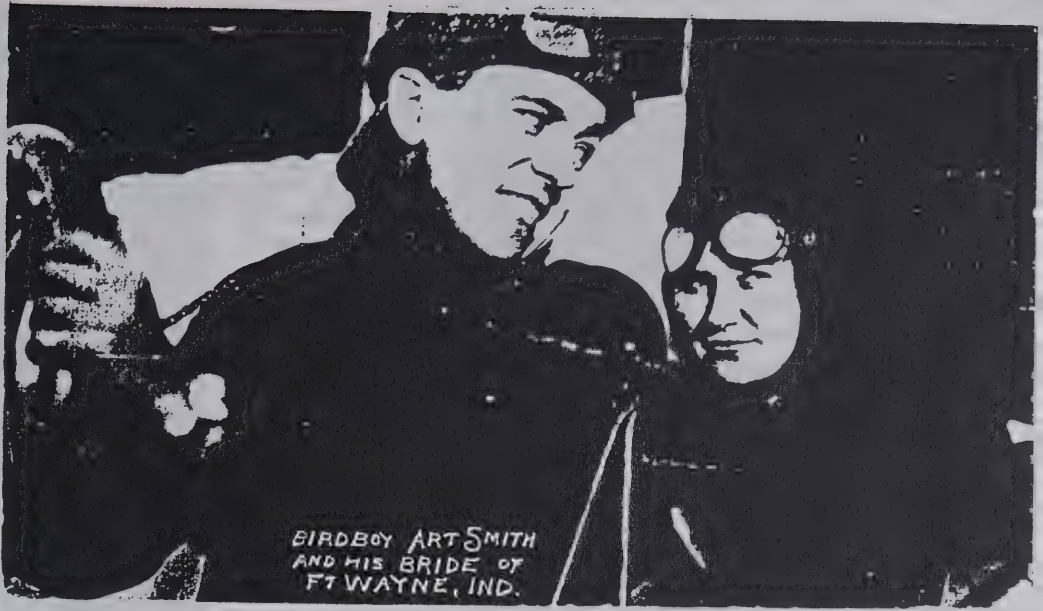
Mr. & Mrs. Art Smith


& FT. WAYNE R.P.O. 1 NOV 1912

9

Jan 1913
Elopement + 10 weeks

1 0

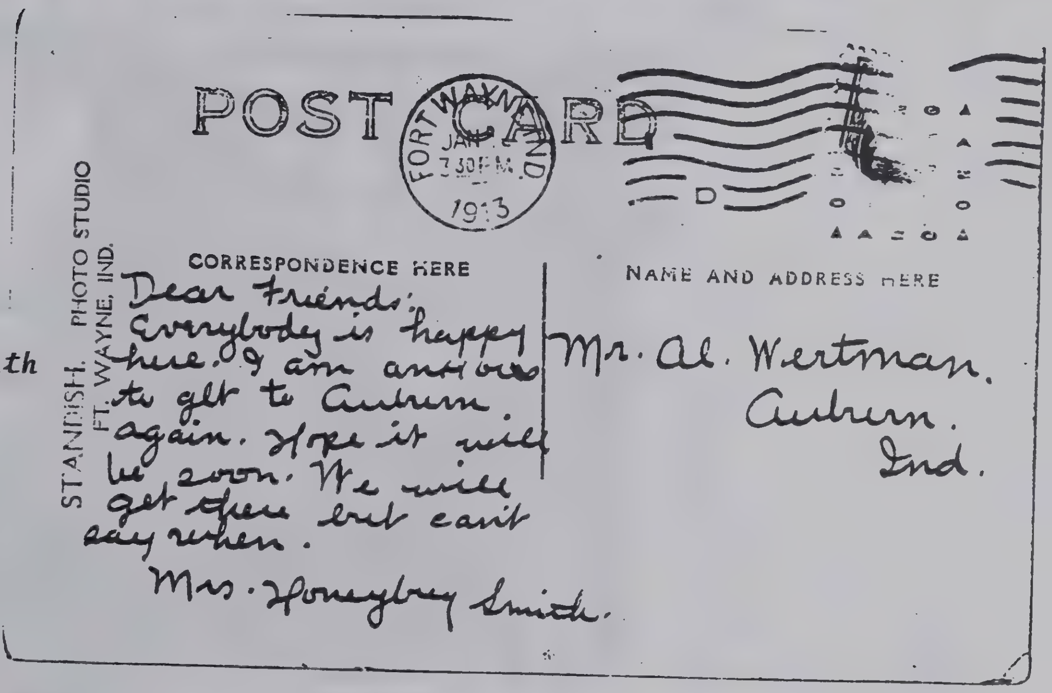


BIRDBOY ART SMITH
AND HIS BRIDE OF
FT WAYNE, IND.

Dear Friend,

Everybody is happy here. I am anxious to get to Auburn again. Hope it will be soon. We will get there but can't say when.

Mrs. Honeybug Smith



POST CARD

FORT WAYNE IND.
JAN
3:30 PM
1913

STANDISH. PHOTO STUDIO
FT. WAYNE, IND.

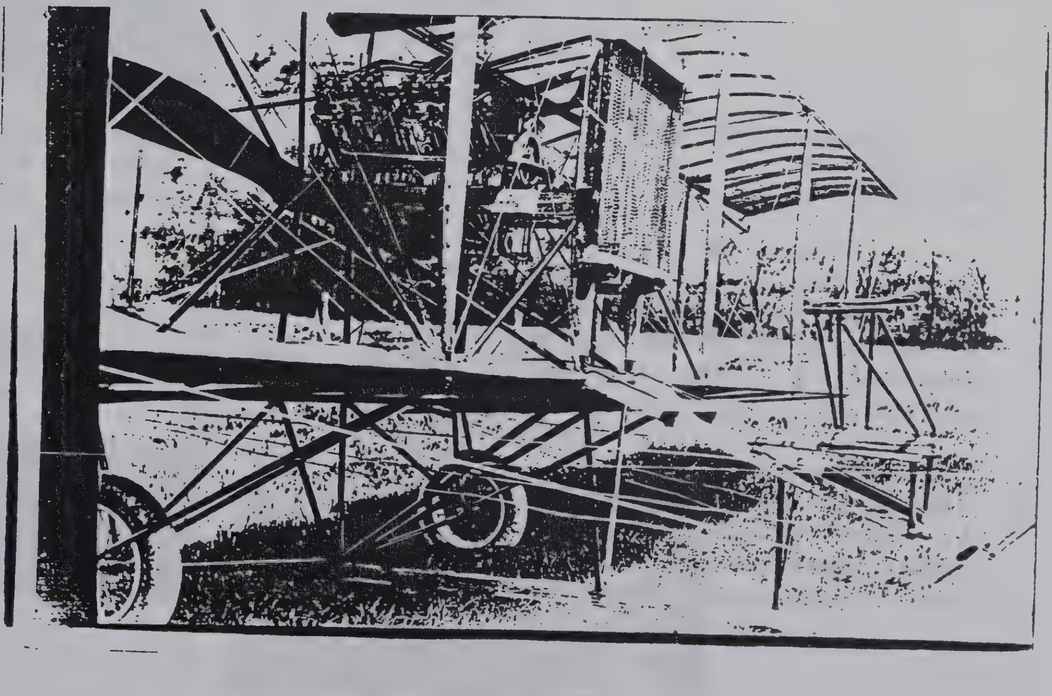
CORRESPONDENCE HERE

Dear Friends,
Everybody is happy here. I am anxious to get to Auburn again. Hope it will be soon. We will get there but can't say when.
Mrs. Honeybug Smith.

NAME AND ADDRESS HERE

Mr. Al. Wertman.
Auburn.
Ind.

1 0

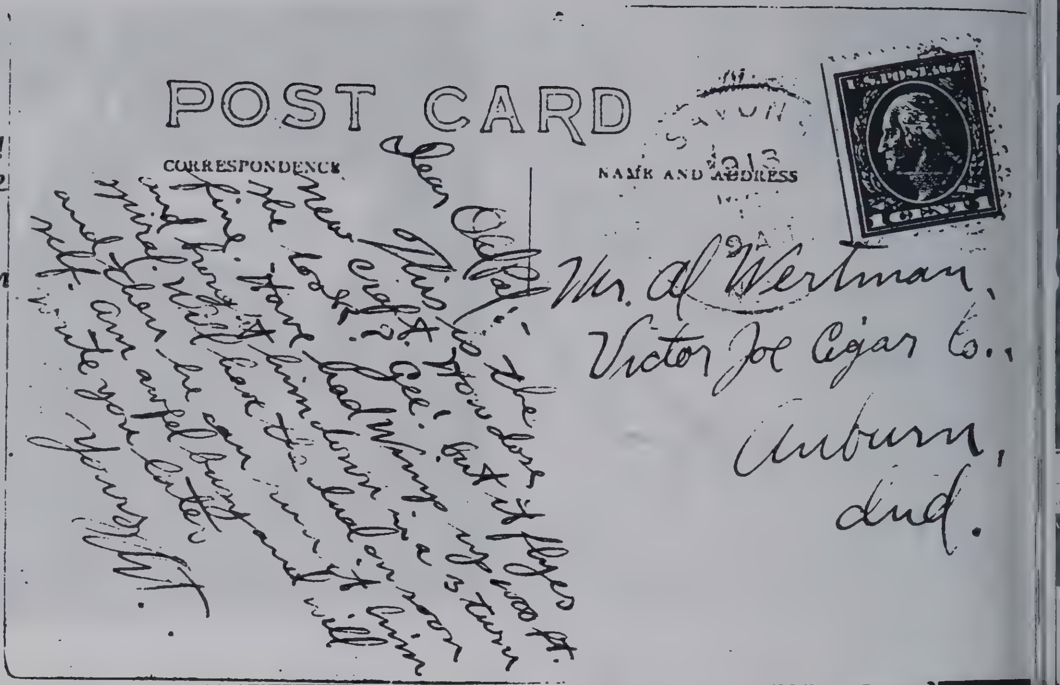


1 1

May 18
1913

Dear Old Pal May 18, 1913

This is the new craft. How dose she look? Gee! but it flyes fine. Have had wings up 1,000 feet and brought him down in a 3 turn and then he can run it himself. Am awful busy and will write you later.
Yours Art


POST CARD

CORRESPONDENCE

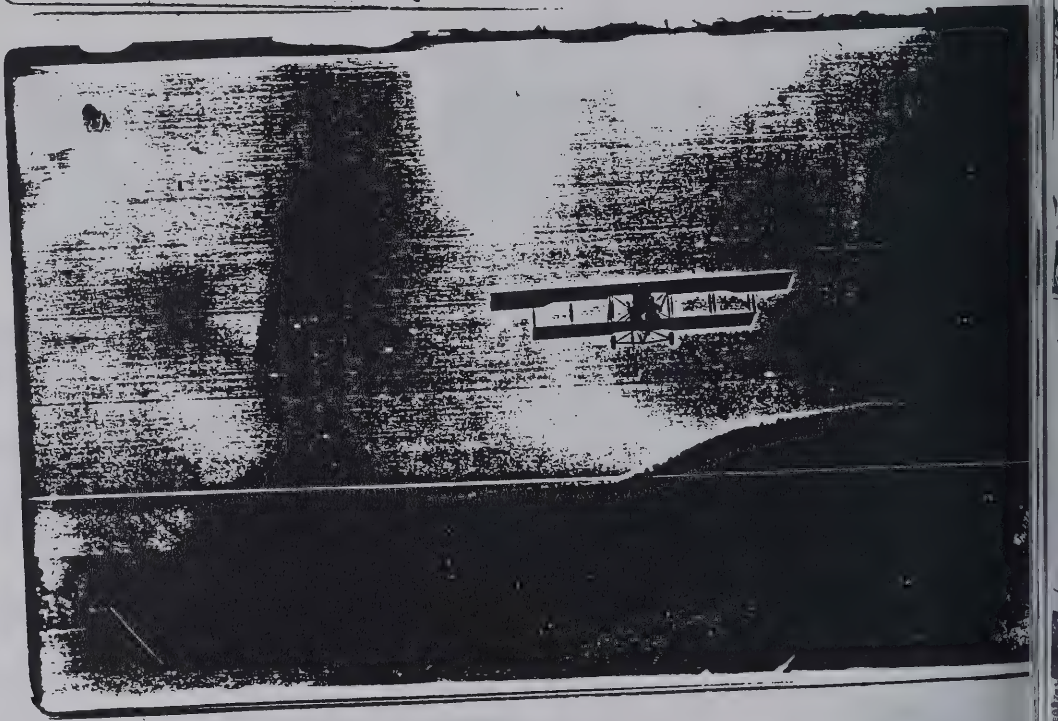
Dear Old Pal:- This is the new craft. How dose she look? Gee! but it flyes fine. Have had Wings up 1000 ft. and brung it him down in a 3 turn spiral. Will have the dual on soon and then he can run it him self. Am awful busy and will write you later.
Yours Art.

NAME AND ADDRESS

SAVONA
1913

Mr. Al Wertman,
Victor Joe Cigar Co.,
Auburn,
Ind.

(Barnstorming 1913)
11



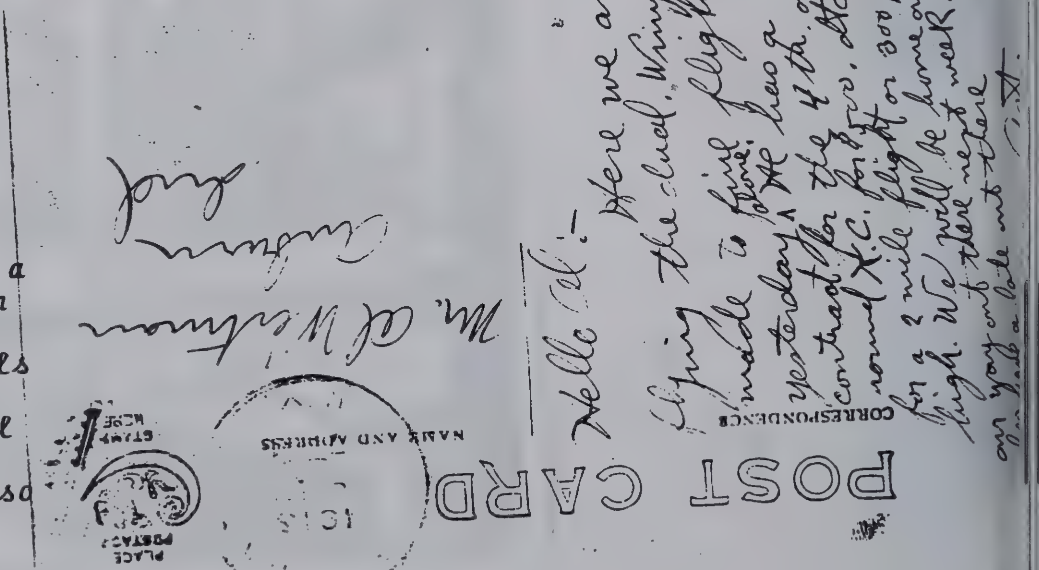
June 23, 1913
Savonia, N.Y.

12

June 23, 1913

Hello Al:-

Here we are flying the dual. wings. made to fine flights yesterday alone We has a contract for the 4th on around K.C. for $500.
It calls for a 2 mileflight or 300 feet high. We will be home on our way out there next week. I also have a date out there.
Art


POST CARD

CORRESPONDENCE

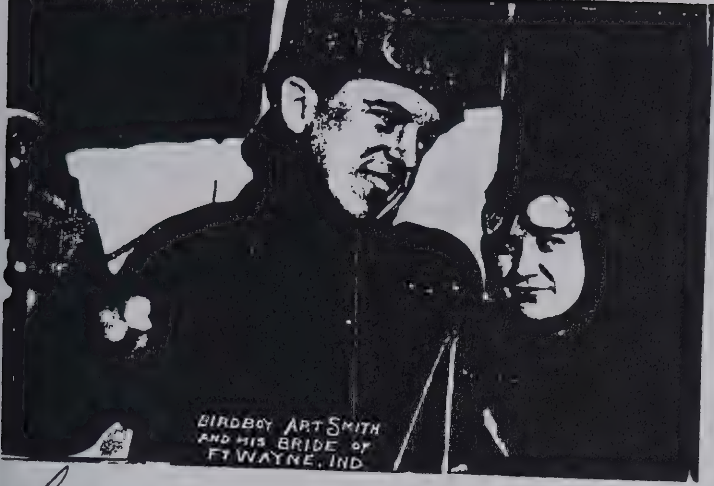
Hello Al:-
Here we ar flying the dual. Wing made to fine flights yesterday alone. We has a contract for the 4th. on round K.C. for $500. It ca for a 2 mile flight or 300 ft high. We will be home on our way out there next week. a I have a date out there
Art.

NAME AND ADDRESS

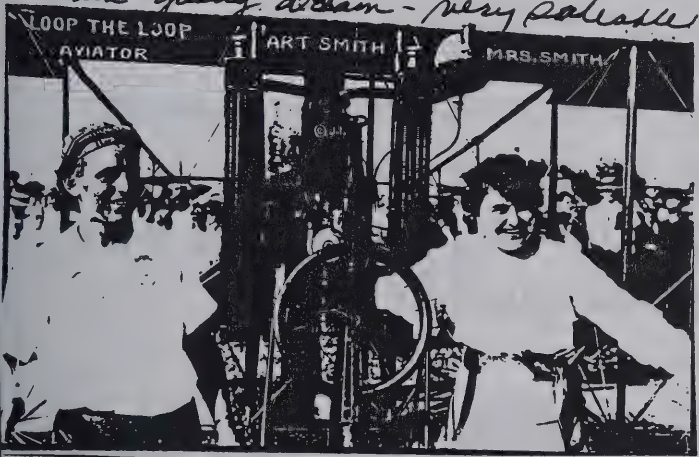
1913

PLACE POSTAGE STAMP HERE

Mr. Al Wertman
Auburn
Ind

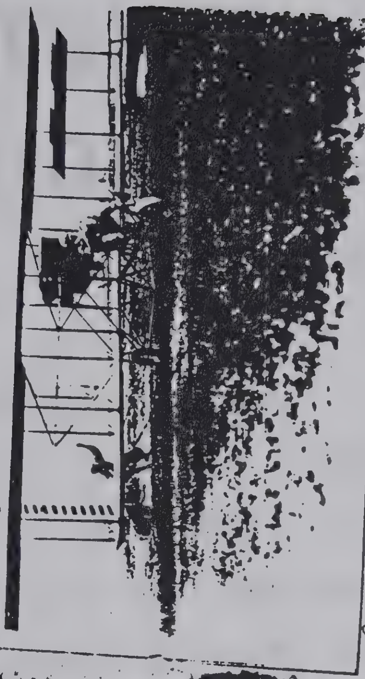

BIRDBOY ART SMITH
AND HIS BRIDE OF
FT WAYNE, IND

Love's young dream - very saleable!

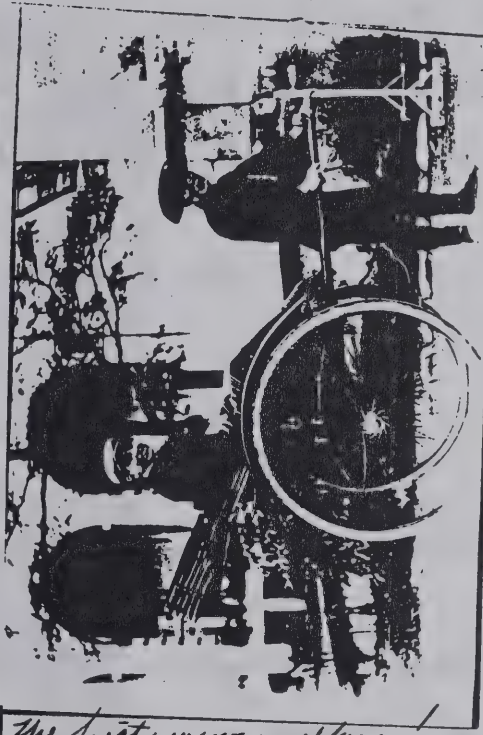

LOOP THE LOOP
AVIATOR
ART SMITH
MRS. SMITH

Racing against mini-cars.

a passenger aboard at Clifton Kansas.

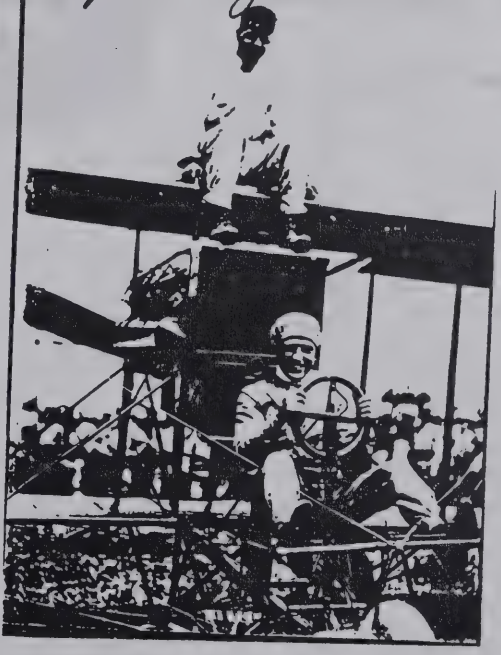


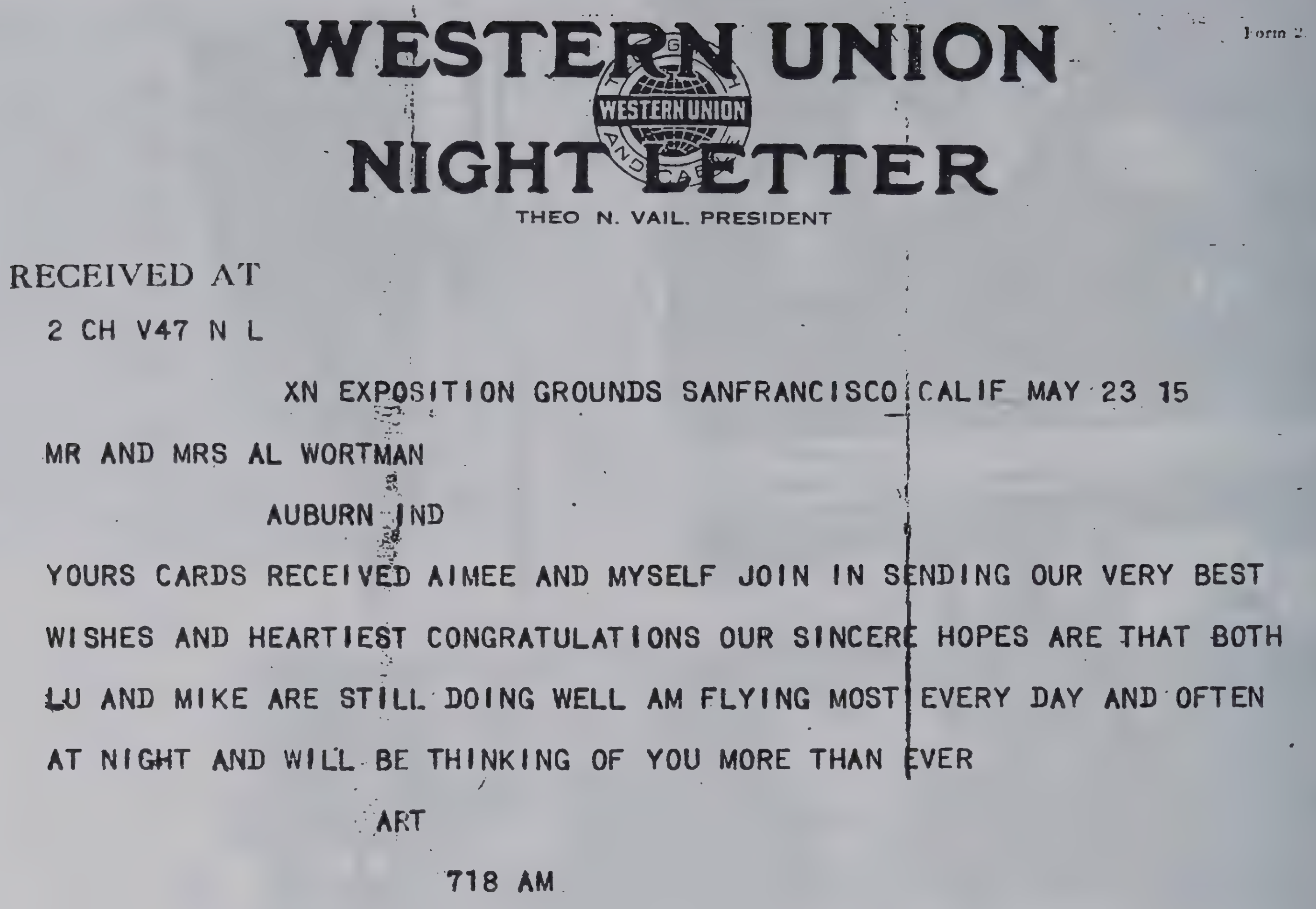
Barnstorming - before a take-off



Japanese tour - 1916

The first wing walkers!





Form 2.

WESTERN UNION
NIGHT LETTER

THEO N. VAIL, PRESIDENT

RECEIVED AT

2 CH V47 N L

XN EXPOSITION GROUNDS SANFRANCISCO CALIF MAY 23 15

MR AND MRS AL WORTMAN
AUBURN IND

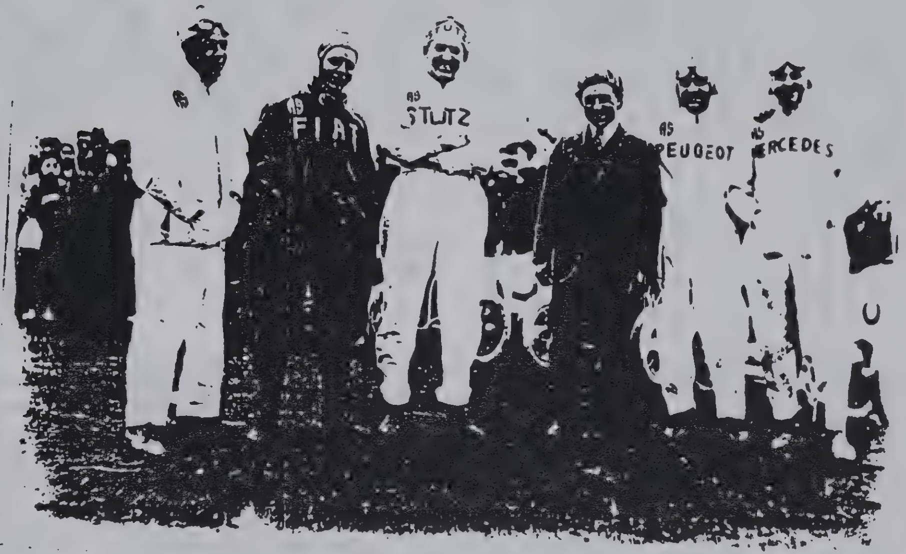
YOURS CARDS RECEIVED AIMEE AND MYSELF JOIN IN SENDING OUR VERY BEST WISHES AND HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS OUR SINCERE HOPES ARE THAT BOTH LU AND MIKE ARE STILL DOING WELL AM FLYING MOST EVERY DAY AND OFTEN AT NIGHT AND WILL BE THINKING OF YOU MORE THAN EVER

ART

718 AM

At an absolute pinnacle of public acclaim - the 4 month S.F. Panama-Pacific Expo. flights —
Less than a year before the divorce.

my "Baby Boys"


AS FIAT
AS STUTZ
AS PEUGEOT
AS ERCEDES

Japanese tour
1916-7

Probably not authorized Reps. of the named companies. They accompanied him to Japan and gave exhibitions of racing in the "baby" race cars he owned.

Relatives, Friends Add to Art Smith Lore

The autobiography of Art Smith, Fort Wayne's first aviator, which has been re-printed in the News-Sentinel has awakened many memories among people who knew the daring young man.

Mrs. Al Wertman

"The newspaper story kept to the facts very well," said Mrs. Al Wertman, 3432 West Fourth St., Auburn, the widow of Art's boyhood friend. About the elopement of Art and Aimee to Hillsdale, Mich., she said:

"They were supposed to meet us at the station. When they didn't come, we wondered what had happened. We asked someone and they said, 'Oh, his plane was wrecked.'

"We found them in the hotel. Art's face was scratched up pretty bad. He had gotten a mouthful of dirt. Aimee was seriously hurt. If anything, the newspaper story didn't make it out as bad as it was.

"Al carried Art to Aimee's room in the hotel and we stood up with them when they were married. The next day, the photographers came and they got another couple to stand up with them for pictures which they put on postcards. We felt kinda bad about it for a long while.

"My husband worked in a cigar factory and later we bought it. He had one cigar which he called "The Hi Flier" and he used Art Smith's picture on it. Art wanted Al to go to Japan with him, but we had been married only a few months and he didn't want to leave me."

Mr. Wertman died almost four years ago. Mrs. Wertman has several scrapbooks and many snapshots which were sent to them by the famous aviator.

Robert S. Bradley

"I helped Art Smith build his second plane, the one he used to elope to Hillsdale, Mich.," said Robert S. Bradley, owner and operator of the National Neon Sign Co., who was a pastor of the Church of the Nazarene for 40 years before retiring.

"Art assembled that plane on the fourth floor of the Charles Batchelor building at the corner of Clinton and Columbia streets. He had to go through my showrooms (electrical equipment) to get to his shop. When he needed assistance with some part of the work, I went up and helped out.

"After he had the plane all built, he took it apart, moved it out to the Driving Park and reassembled it. He asked me to ride in it, but I never did. He was a short, thin fellow with lots of nervous energy. If he had lived, he would have given Lindbergh some competition. He was the kind of a fellow to try stunts like that."

Mrs. Harold Moore

A cousin of Art Smith, Mrs. Harold Moore, 5150 Stellhorn Road, has the scrapbooks kept by Art's mother, Mrs. Ida Krick Smith, who was a sister of Mrs. Moore's mother, Mrs. Sarah Jane Krick Steel.

Included in the scrapbook is a telegram from the Emperior of Japan who, reading about the fatal crash in the newspapers, wanted to know if the flier was the same one who had delighted him and the Japanese people with his daring flights ten years earlier.

Mrs. Moore said that the series republished in the News-Sentinel was largely correct, but it omitted some details such as the fact that her mother signed one of Art's notes. He paid her promptly.

"Art was the fourth child and the only one to live to maturity," Mrs. Moore said. "The oldest child, a girl, died before she reached school age. Boy and girl twins were born next. The girl was dead at birth and the boy lived until he was around 12 I think. Art, the youngest child, really grew up alone.

A. E. Johnson *

"There are . . . things incorrect in Art's book, but these are of his own making," wrote a cousin, A. E. Johnson, R.R. 4, Fort Wayne. "For instance, he had an uncle that helped him build his first plane from the ground up and was on the road with him for months.

"This man would assemble the plane ready to fly without any help from Art. Art many times would get to the field just in time to make his flight and would say, 'Everything ready to go, Ed?'

"He would then make his flight and this man would then disassemble the plane and ship it on to the next place he was to fly. This man went home many times in the beginning with no pay or sometimes very little. For some reason, this man never knew why, Art never mentioned his name in his book. This was quite a blow to this man after all he had done for Art and he never quite got over it.

"I know this is correct because this man was my father, Edgar E. Johnson, now deceased."

William Fitzsimmons

William Fitzsimmons, south of Auburn, who has been a pilot since 1921, tells of using Art Smith's own sky-writing invention to write Art's name over Smith Field during a memorial service held in 1933. He also used the in-

(Continued on Page 25, Column 7)

Relatives,

(Continued from Page 23)

vention during the Chicago World's Fair.

"I think we were the only people to use the invention besides Art," Fitzsimmons said, referring to the advertising firm he represented. "Most sky-writing planes now use ordinary floor oil released under pressure.

"Art's invention called for phosphorous. It was kept in a solid state under cold water and liquefied under hot water from the engine. The equipment weighed 800 pounds and the whole process was very dangerous. We would work with the phosphorous under water with gloves. When the gloves dried, they burst into flame. Once we set fire to a wheat field and had to pay for the crop."

"I first met Art through Al Wertman, when Art was flying for the Army at McCook Field. We often visited with him at Bryan, O., while he was night-flying for the U.S. Mails. He had a cot in the hangar at the Bryan field, which was lighted, and stopped over there until daylight because the Cleveland field was not yet lighted.

"Art had used his sky-writing invention only a few times in experimentation and demonstrati
before he crashed," Fitzsimmo
said. "We experimented with it
night and found that the strea
were seen 150 miles away. Peop
in Fort Wayne got terribly e
cited. Many reported seeing
mysterious dirigible and some sa
they even saw people sitting
it!"

F.W. Sentinel
[illegible]
Aug 22, 1956 ?
accurate reporting ?

1. Al fixed the downed plane between 12 & 3 PM. near Hunterstown.

2. Art bugged Auburn to let them know he was underway (soon after 3:00 P.M.)

3. Mrs. W. indicates a meeting at a station, [illegible] field near Hillsdale

1. Al got from Hunterstown to A. & Hillsdale by 5:00 P.M. ?

* including his age

TOKYO, TUESDAY, JUNE 6 1916.

ART SMITH'S VIEWS ON SUBJECT OF VICE

Protests Against Proposed Establishment of Quarters at Osaka

Before leaving Osaka May 29 Art Smith, the American aviator, gave to Mr. George Gleason, honorary secretary of the Y.M.C.A., the following statement regarding the proposed establishment of new vice quarters there:

To My Friends in Osaka: Having learned of the plan to open a new licensed quarter in Osaka, before leaving this great city, I want to make a protest against this extension of what is recognised in my country as the great Social Evil.

No man can be a successful aviator or a winning athlete who habitually visits such resorts. And even for advancement in business, clean moral habits are considered a prime requisite.

In order to develop the morals of young men, it seems to me that the licensed quarters should be gradually decreased rather than increased. I hope, therefore, that my thousands of friends in Osaka, who have been so appreciative of my flights at Naruo and have made my stay here so pleasant, will unite and prevent the opening of the Tobita Licensed Quarter.

Truly yours,
ART SMITH.

HIS MAJESTY TO SEE ART SMITH FLY TODAY

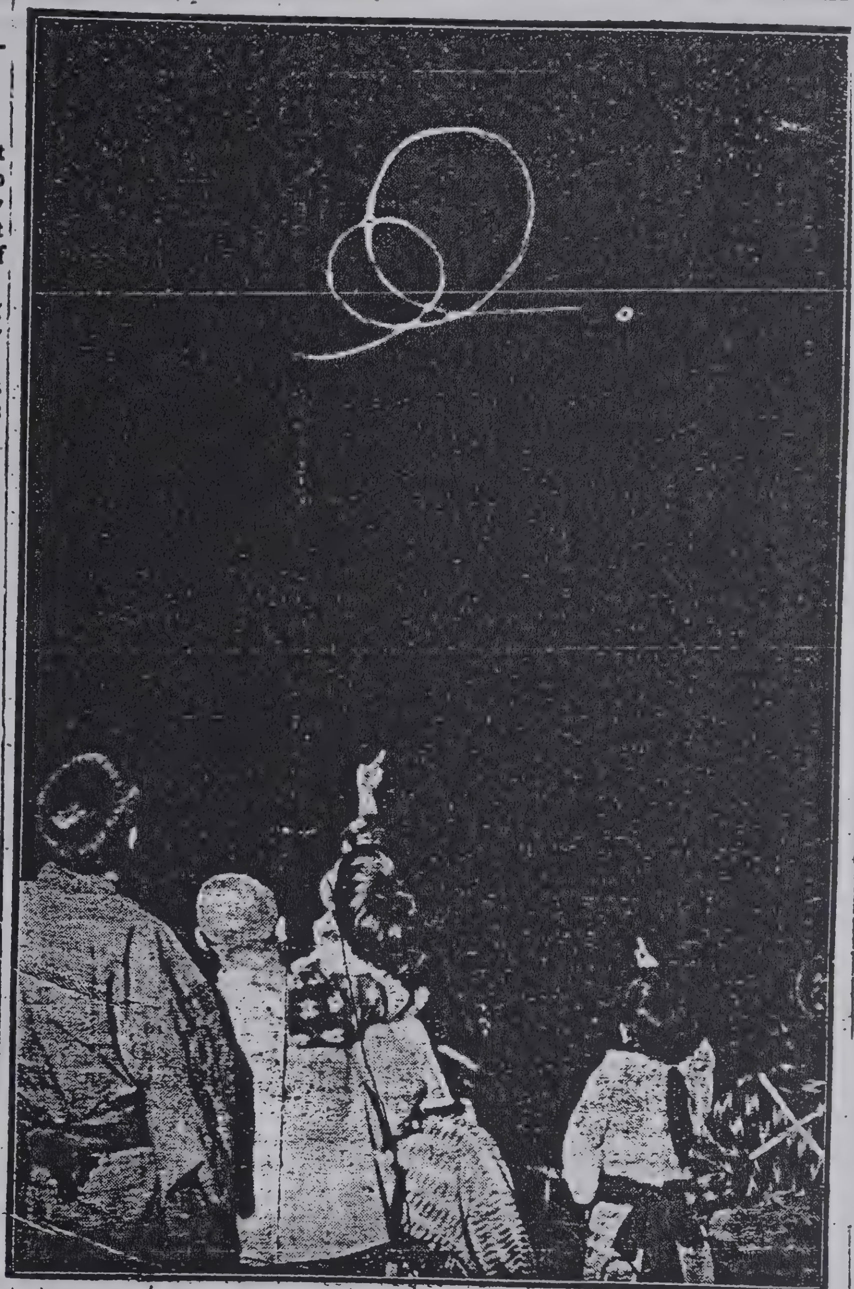
Aviator Gets Permission to Circle Palace Grounds and Loop Over Nijubashi

Art Smith will reach the climax of his triumphal tour of Japan this afternoon. The American aviator will fly for His Majesty the Emperor of Japan.

No other aviator, Japanese or foreign, has ever been honored by permission to circle the grounds of the Imperial Palace and to loop the loop over the Nijubashi. That is what Art Smith, with the permission of the Imperial Household, will do this afternoon. He will start from the Aoyama Parade Grounds at 3 o'clock, will circle the place grounds and then, high up over the Nijubashi, he will "pay his respects" to the Mikado in a way no ruler of Japan ever had respects paid to him before. Naturally, the little bird-man hopes to make this flight the best he has ever made.

After Sunday's flights at Aoyama, which were witnessed by the Crown Prince and his brothers, General Nagaoka, president of the National Aviation Society, applied to the Imperial House-

PART OF ART SMITH'S FIERY TRAIL



TOKYO'S TWO MILLIONS WATCH AMERICAN MAKE NIGHT FLIGHT

Crowds Cheer Art Smith As His Biplane Marks Trail of Fire Over the City

While a city of two million inhabitants looked on, Art Smith staged the most spectacular exhibition in the way of aviation ever seen in Japan, last night, when he made his biplane trace a tortuous luminous trail in the night sky over Tokyo. This night flight by the American aviator, a sample of what he did every night for weeks at the San Francisco fair last summer, was the first thing of the kind ever staged in Tokyo.

for Mr. Smith's fiery trail was visible from all parts of Tokyo, except those portions which were cut off by clouds.

As it was the largest, so it was also the most enthusiastic crowd that has ever witnessed an aviation event in Japan. He was cheered from the time he appeared little more than a small red line, above the tree tops, to the time he finished the thirteenth and last loop and swooped out of sight. Then his ride from Aoyama to the Imperial Hotel in a motor car

of Japanese
triumph
ty before
1/16 crash on
Hokkaido that
ut the tour
e. He returned
in 1917 to finish
recuperating

The Japan Advertiser
Summer 1916

Five years ago, "Art" Smith was an Indiana office boy, juggling blue prints, sharpening pencils, and running errands for a Fort Wayne architect. To day he is known as the most daring aviator in America. Across the interim fate has written one of the strangest stories in modern aeronautics.

Smith is an aerial fly-by-night—the only aeronaut in the world who loops the loop in pitch darkness. With fireworks spitting sparks from his reeling aeroplane he writes rings of fire all over the big, black sky, while thousands of mere earthfolk gape and gasp below him.

Anybody who attended the Panama-Pacific Exposition at San Francisco will remember "Art" Smith. It was the ex office-boy who, in a self-made machine, took the place of the great Beachy, and proved himself even greater. When Pegoud, the original loop-the-looper, was killed by a German airman, the mantle of the spectacular Frenchman fell on the boy's shoulders, and foreign governments vied with each other to obtain him for their aviation corps; money and adulation flowed his way.

In the daytime, Smith employs smoke torches to mark his course, but it is at night that he is in his glory, writing with a finger of fire across the clouds. He loves to trick his spectators, and disappear for long intervals, bursting forth like a shooting star with rekindled torches in some unexpected quarter of the heavens.

In his official autobiography, published in the San Francisco "Bulletin," Smith tells how he dreamed of aeroplanes as he worked about the architect's office for five dollars a week. But there was a long, hard road to follow before "Art's" dream came true.

Now for the strangest part of the whole story:

One day he got up courage to ask his father to mortage his home for funds to build an aeroplane, and the father had sufficient confidence in his fifteen-year-old boy to consent to his astonishing request.

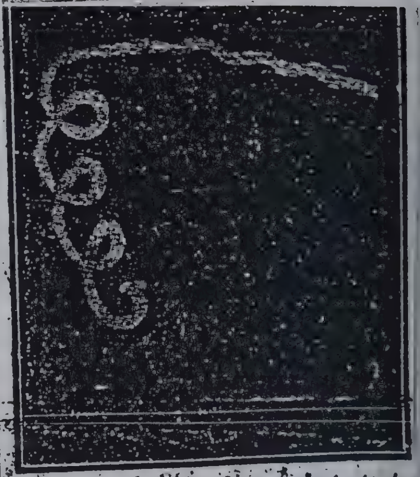
Smith had never seen an aeroplane closely and could not afford a trip to examine one. So he bought books and pamphlets on aeronautics and studied them. Then he purchased wood, wire, metal, canvas and an engine. After whitewashing the windows of the barn which was his workshop, he went to work on the framework of his aeroplane, while on her own sewing machine his mother prepared the cloth for his growing wings. She had become used to her son's penchant for the spectacular in his early boyhood, when on a self-made circular springboard he "looped the gap" on roller skates before her horrified eyes.

The mortgage fell due, and foreclosure followed. To make matters even worse, the father was rapidly growing blind. Mrs. Smith was sent to visit with relatives, and father and son lived in the barn where the machine was taking form.

The day of the trial trip came. On the previous night the aeroplane was wheeled stealthily through the deserted streets to the old ball ground at Fort Wayne. In the early morning the son took his place at the levers. A light

The day of the trial trip came. On the previous night the aeroplane was wheeled stealthily through the deserted streets to the old ball ground at Fort Wayne. In the early morning the son took his place at the levers. A light

snow had fallen, and the sun was shining brightly on the glistening field. The engine was started. The machine cut a path across the snow and shot into the air. Something was wrong. It darted upward like a kite. Then, with a shift of the lever, it plunged toward



The photograph shows what spectators see of Smith's aeroplane, lighted, a it turns over and over in the dark.

the earth. Again it rose, and again i plunged—this time disastrously. I struck the ground with a crash an crumpled into wreckage. Smith wa hurled far from the machine, escapin serious injury by a miracle.

The engine was unharmed, and he ha enough raw material for reconstructio But he decided that he needed mo knowledge before rebuilding. So h beat his way to Chicago, where he had chance to examine some aeroplan closely, although the aviation schoo were closed to him on account of e pense.

Returning, he remodeled his machi and made an exhibition flight. It w successful, although he had another na row escape. With his share of the g receipts he was able to pay off the n on which his father had staked the l of his small property. As his skill gr he traveled about the country, givi exhibitions at state fairs, and mak money. In Texas, he says, he was m bed because engine troubles preven his ascension. The crowd threw bri and bottles at him.

When Beachy was killed, Smith plied for his place at the Panama-Pac Exposition. He had a difficlut time first, for the late aviator had been po lar. But the startling feats of the n comer compelled admiration. He came the idol of San Francisco, to-day his name is a household wor that city. Why his fame is not gre in the East is incomprehensible.

He is said to have refused offers to the aviation corps of France or R as he prefers to stay at home and " the loop safely in America." He however, signified his readines assist Uncle Sam at any time tha services may be required for nat defense. If he does this free of ch he will be contributing a large su the Government, for which he is too young to vote. At this fair it stated that he received one thousand lars for an afternoon flight and fi hundred dollars for an evening f He is interested in the problem of f and landing backward, and in the mercial future of the aeroplane.

Something of a record for a yo er, is it not?

He is interested in the problem of flying and landing backward, and in the commercial future of the aeroplane.

Something of a record for a youngster, is it not?

But after all who is the greater—the boy who could carry a dime-novel idea to a triumph of scientific achievement or the half-blind father who backed it with his last cent?

Dec 1918 or Jan 191

WORLD'S MOST SPECTACULAR FLIER, ART SMITH, OF STUNT FAME, SENT TO CARRUTHERS; HE'S EXPERIMENTING FOR FUTURE AIR FEATS; MOTORS MUST BE BETTERED, HE SAYS, TO MAKE FLYING POPULAR

Left: Art Smith, civilian flying instructor at Carruthers Field and his smile that never comes off. In the next photo Smith is wearing "some" of the medals he has won for exhibition flying in Japan, China and the United States.

Above, right, is the "baby" car that the famous flyer parks in hotel lobbies and rides around the ship deck. Below, right, he is shown testing the machinery of a plane he constructed while he was in Japan.

Y MAE BIDDISON BENSON.

Smith is here!

e internationally famous civilian is an instructor at Carruthers and has brought with him all his h enthusiasm.

s so wonderful to mount up and bove the earth far away from the chuckle of life," the renowned ition stunter said, prefacing a vol- questions that were put to him. st before the armistice was signed field sent out an S. O. S. call for uctors. I was taken from the ley Experimental Field and order- re. So far my work has been to he airworthiness of planes," Smith

ffered Country His Services.

is still a civilian flier.

hen America entered the war I to Washington and offered my es in any capacity they were d to use me. I was assigned to ey Field and later to the Wilbur t Field to work out special fea- that I had designed for my own tion planes. That's what I have doing since the States entered ar," the crack flier explained.

of his pet theories is the possi- of constructing an instruction that will more thoroughly ac- the flier with the approach of gerous condition.

lieve that most accidents are due to inexperience," Smith said. "And I a man is taught how to avoid the deadly tail spin, a position that it is impossible to overcome once the plane takes it, one-half the accidents will be avoided."

Came Early to Texas.

Art Smith has been doing exposition flying since 1911. The first time he shippd his planes away from his home in Fort Wayne, Indiana, for exposition stunts was in 1911 when he stunted in Bay City and Bryan, Texas. Smith won a medal at the Dallas State Fair in 1915. He has done exposition work in China, Japan, Korea and Manchuria.

"The cherry blossoms, the wistaria and the chrysanthemums of Japan are more wonderful than they are reputed to be," he declared enthusiastically, as he discussed his work in Japan in 1916 and 1917.

At the San Francisco Exposition Smith had with his aerial stunts a ground attraction. This consisted of "baby" racing cars which he built himself. They are equipped with a Harley-Davidson racing motor and are made of the most durable material porcurable. Smith has one at Carruthers Field with him. En route to Japan he didn't bother to walk around the deck, he just drove the baby car.

"When America entered the war, I had no more use for my baby cars, so I'm selling them all but one," the inventor-flier said.

"How did I happen to start this business?" he repeated.

Airplanes Not Sure Yet.

"I began architectural drafting at an early age. Then I built a model airplane to fly with rubber bands. Finally I interested my parents sufficiently to induce them to give me a start and let me try my 'wings.' For a while it was pretty hard sailing. But it's all easy now.'"

Judging from the medals Smith pins on his waistcoat, things do look "easy now."

"Will airplanes ever become as common as automobiles?"

"I should say not until the motor is perfected so that the power will be more assured and less apt to fail in mid-air," he replied. "When aviation does come into its own, I don't see why Texas shouldn't be the pioneer. The most wonderful landing places in the counrty are here on the broad open tracts. It's fine."

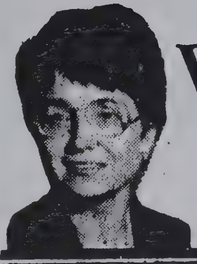
Just a Kid Yet.

"Whew! Sure, I'm as enthusiastic as ever. I haven't lost one bit of my enthusiasm. When I was building my first plane, I did it with so much yearning that I was up before the sun and working long after dark. It's worth it. When you're up in the air you don't have to eat somebody else's dust for miles and miles, either," the youthful aviator said vivaciously.

"I'm a little over 20, but I've been 20 for about eight years," he laughed.

Smith doesn't know where he will be ordered from Carruthers. He expects to continue experimental work for the army wit to view of perfecting airplanes for military and commercial purposes.

Don't miss these little gems of local history



View and Review

By Rachel Roberts

The first time "Auburn Reflections" ran in the newspapers, I nearly missed it. It was, after all, tiny and placed away near the bottom of the page. I'd closed the paper, and then, remembering a detail I wanted to check, opened it up again, and there it was. Sure, it was associated with a company, an advertisement, in fact, but that's okay. "Auburn Reflections" is a "sponsored series intended to reflect on the history of Auburn that might have gone unnoticed or forgotten." It is written by Hubert Stackhouse, in collaboration with S. Ted Walters. The artwork that accompanies each little vignette is prepared by DeKalb High School Commercial Art class students.

Last week, I talked with Mr. Stackhouse about the series. I learned that at first only eight were projected, "but, to date, 13 have been published." Stackhouse told me he's written 22 so far and added with a chuckle, "and some which may never see print." When I asked about those, he explained that when he and Mr. Walters begin reminiscing, talking, and researching, "certain details and events come up about certain people which probably should just as well be forgotten." Some of those tidbits and facts could be classified under categories as diverse or broad as "The Littlest Angel," or one heading, which Mr. Stackhouse offered, "The Littlest Bootlegger of them all."

Ted Walters is a "bonafide source about these things," Stackhouse said, mentioning in passing that just recently when the newspaper published a feature about Wanda and Roger Grogg, "Roger mentioned in that article something about the aviator, Art Smith, that Walters was able to document."

Mr. Stackhouse's concept about the series is that hopefully he can get them typed, collected, and placed in Eckhart Public Library before the end of the year. He's already planned an appropriate format, explaining that he hopes the collection will include not only the printed version that appeared in the newspaper, but also the longer article from which it came. "The newspaper versions had to be cut down to approximately 150 words, and my articles, at least some of them, are considerably longer than that."

Mrs. Smith, Administrator of Eckhart Public Library, is enthusiastic about the possibility of having such a collection. "They would be valuable historically," she says, "and besides, they're interesting to read."

Underscoring her sentiment about the series, are other readers who say they not only enjoy "the stories," "the artwork by those talented students," and "the subtle wry humorous style of writing," but also the fact that "the series are priceless little gems, which simply ought to be preserved."

"Auburn Reflections" now appears about once a month and is sponsored by the folks at McComb, Dilgard and Cline Funeral Home. They certainly tapped two good sources when they gave the nod to Stackhouse and Walters.

Walters is known for his ability to tell stories about Auburn, and he's had a long working career in the midst of Auburn's development. Stackhouse's respect for the written word is indisputable and his outstanding career as a teacher was and is a gift to the many people of Auburn who were fortunate to have "had" him in school. His ability to tell a yarn is also generous.

Watch for the little series, and if you enjoy reading such things as "The Swamp with the Heart of Gold" or details about remedies "Learned at My Mother's Knee," do give Mr. Stackhouse of Mr. Walters or Mr. Craig Taylor a buzz and let them know.

After all, we have to keep these two gentlemen "rock-rocking, talk-talking, rock-rocking" some more.

Editor's note: "Auburn Reflections" appears on the first Monday of each month. The next edition is coming Monday, June 4.

The Evening Star, Thurs., Oct. 18, 1990, Page B4

Opinion/Commentary

Eighty years ago, airplanes were only for the daring

View and Review

By Rachel Roberts

Hearing about United Airline's $~~2~~ 22 billion order for new planes from Boeing Corp. this week reminded me how far we have come in 80 short years.

About this time in 1911, a young, wiry energetic boy from Fort Wayne shocked a "white-knuckled" crowd of on-lookers when he succeeded in getting his homemade Curtis-type, pusher biplane into the air. He had tested his first design the previous winter with disastrous results, and this model was carefully constructed, with the help of mechanical genius Al Wertman, to succeed where the first had failed. Two short test flights indicated that Art Smith's Oct. 21 flying exhibition would prove the air-worthiness of his little aeroplane. It did.

The flying weather that day in 1911, was not good, but extra street cars and advertisements had brought hundreds of people to Driving Park to watch the "Smash-Up Kid" from Fort Wayne.

His flight was perilous, culminating in a helpless dive toward the ground. At the last moment, however, the control surfaces bit, and Art came out of the potential death dive. Young Smith landed some 200 feet down the field. The crowd cheered. Instead of being a fool kid, Smith was now a hero. It was the beginning of his wonderful and adventurous career.

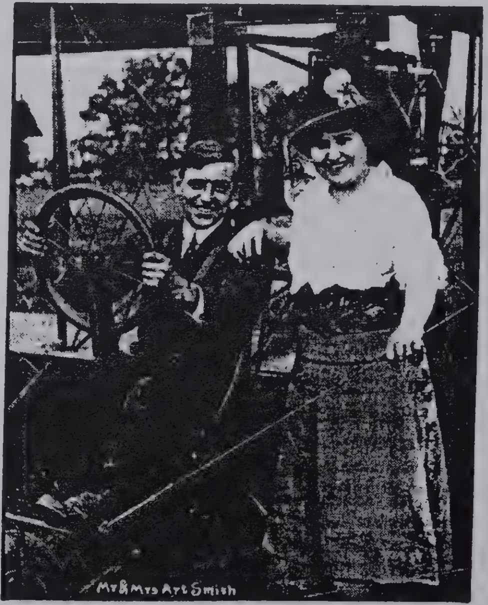
The very following October, Art Smith eloped with "HoneyBug," Aimee Cour, and on their elopment flight crashed near Hillsdale, Mich. Undeterred, they were married by a substitute preacher, both bandaged and bruised, lying side by side "on a bed of pain," with Al and Lucille Wertman as witnesses. The new bride told a Hillsdale Daily reporter before she left town that "I am not the least bit afraid to fly with Art, but do not expect to do so again."

The ingenuity of this young man from Fort Wayne, his determination to succeed, his desire to soar into space and experience freedom from the earth is an interesting story. It underscores for people interested in aviation just how short of time it has been since our culture knew nothing about such inventions. There was no such thing as airports, air control towers radar, or air mail service. In fact, it had only been seven years since the Wright brothers had flown their aeroplane across the beach at Kitty Hawk, N.C. Today, we depend upon airplanes, and the economic impact of air-related businesses and industries on our way of life, culture, and government is inestimable.

Incidentally, after World War II, Art Smith joined the Air Mail Service, where he helped inaugurate night air mail service. Here he met and became acquainted with young Charles Lindbergh. Smith was by this time an internationally famous stunt flier, and no doubt Lindbergh recognized a kindred spirit. Later, after Lindbergh's famous solo flight across the Atlantic in 1927, he celebrated his achievement by flying across America. Art Smith had died the previous year, so it was fitting that "Lucky Lindy" deliberately routed his tour to pass over the city of Fort Wayne in order to pay tribute to Smith.

In the prodigious and grand volumes of DeKalb County 1837-1987, edited by historian John Martin Smith, there are many details about local aviation interests, including a section about Art Smith (no relation to the historian).

Our Octobers are often times for dreams, blazing with color, tinged with mellow feelings about the end of summer, but always, always, October is a beautiful time to fly. It seems somehow natural that pioneer aviator Art Smith began his career in such a glorious month.



DARING DUO — Art Smith and his bride, Aimee, traveled extensively giving exhibitions and thrilling crowds. Souvenir postcards and ticket stubs were kept as treasured mementos. This souvenir postcard is owned by Jo Holsinger.

. . . ON FURTHER REFLECTION

REFLECTION

HUBERT L. STACKHOUSE

© 1994

© 1994 Hubert L. Stackhouse
First American Edition 1995

Composition by:
Reflections Press
7652-3 Catawba Lane
Florence, KY 41042

Printed by:
Butler Printing Co.
100 N. Broadway
Butler, IN 46721

Acknowledgments

What is a man without his friends? Well, in this case, he wouldn't be an author, about to spring his third work on the public (for this author is a perpetual reviser who would never get anything ready for the printers, left on his own). But, with the aid of a bright couple from Florence, KY, (Barry and Jenny Bartels), the material was cast onto a computer, given the benefit of the computer's art-dubbing facilities, "covered", and sent on it's merry way to the printers. "Thank you good friends," hardly seems adequate.

Similarly, debts of gratitude are owed to:

- Waanders' Bookmark, and members of the Dekalb County Historical Society -- for their assistance in marketing the works...and their considerable encouragement.
- Silas Teddy Walters (again!), and my own parents, telling what they told...and being what they were.
- The teachers of my youth, and THE TEACHER (Maude Armstrong) who gave me the grip on language that I wield with such pleasure.
- A generous public that has bought the previous works in such delightfully and unanticipated numbers.

Like he said before, "Thank you," hardly seems adequate.

Table Of Contents

Article **Chapter**

On Dying Alone in a New York Nursing Home 1
Charles Eckhart's Gifts...To Me 2
Farewell to the Old Timer 3
The Best Boss He Ever Had 4
Farewell, My Old Gray Menace 5
The Best Boss I Ever Had 6
On Cousins 7
A Proper Reverence for the Values of the Past 8
Mama Misses a "Mean" Score in the Antiques Racket 9
Mr. Miller Obeys the Law 10
Eating Out - Then 11
The Chef Bakes the Torte 12
Quince Honey 13
Hand Packed Ice Cream 14
A Little Witchcraft in the Kitchen 15
Move Over, Escoffier...or Great Chefs I Have Known 16
Justice is Served...Badly? 17
Death Came in Threes 18
The Little Rude Schoolhouse 19
Everything Old is New Again? 20
Holiday Hoopla 21
Making W.A.R. in Auburn 22
Pin Spotter Hi-Jinx 23
You Can't Believe Everything You've Heard--Even Here 24
Orval and the Tack Hammer *An Industrial Legend* 25
Mischance on a Soft Spring Evening 26
Mud Between the Toes? *A Pleasure of My Youth* 27
The Silver Marshall and Me 28
Among My Souvenirs 29
Why Don't Things Taste That Good Anymore? 30

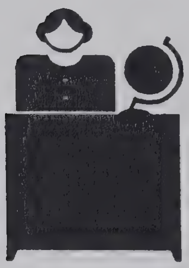
On Dying Alone in a New York Nursing Home

One of the advantages of age may be that you have the time and good sense to reflect on, and to regret, rash actions of your past. You may feel an honest melancholy over the debts that should be paid, but can never be, to others whose mortality has been proven. So it is/was with Miss Maude Armstrong.

. . . .

When first I met the lady, it was vicariously through the rumors of her ferocity that spread ahead of her through the Junior High. Next year, when we ascended to high school, we were in her domain. And, as she was then teaching English 10, in the year after that, we must take our 175 walks in the "Valley of the Maude"!

I have few clear memories of my Freshman year and my English teacher, Mr. Kintner. I know that a year or two after me, he joined the Army (but I'm not sure I was the cause of that!).



But, in 1939 - 40, I was Maude - fodder. I was scared; I was, to some small degree, good; and I was fortunate beyond words! For, being scared, I paid attention; having some talent in language, I "aced" her course at least a couple of the six grading periods; and having paid some attention and learned well the grammatical half of the course, I NEVER AGAIN HAD TO TAKE A COMPOSITION COURSE. (The only further work required in high school was with Miss Gladys Duguid, of whom I have little memory. In college, **I WAS EXEMPTED FROM ALL COMPOSITION BY G.E.D. TEST,** GIVEN TO ALL RETURNING VETERANS.) While others suffered the tortures of the damned -- some actually flunked out because of it! -- I went my merry way to a double major of Foreign Language w/English, and Social Studies.

And , on such a shaky foundation, I taught 34 years of English, substantially, with some degree of success. Two or three administrators were made uncomfortable about my intensity when I taught History, but never a murmur about language instruction. I didn't revel in grammar (few Teachers will!), but I seem to have been adequate, at least!

Did I emulate the lady in classroom management? Well, a "Yes" and a "No". I could, and did maintain 34 years of orderly environment for those who would learn, as did she; but no one could, pound for pound, chill the soul of the dilitary or the negligent as could she! To this very moment, repeat, " No, No, No, You can't **WAS** a fly!!!", and heads will turn and some will recognize whom you imitate.

Did she miss the affection, the adoration that some teachers evoke? Well, if she did, she wasn't the one who would have shown it. She was reputed to have spurned a proposal of marriage from a "real catch" in town life, to follow her lonely career; and by so doing, perhaps signaled the abandonment of popular emotions.

And so it came to be, they say, that when she had retired, and eventually ended in a nursing home in upstate New York...when her plight became known in Auburn and the cards and letters began reaching her, she could not understand why anyone cared about her. Well, dear "late" Lady of Language, perhaps it's because, since we met you, we cannot **WAS** a fly! Go ahead! Drink your lemon juice straight (as you did in my mother's restaurant each morning), drink your black coffee, and correct the grammar of Paradise!

Charles Eckhart's Gifts - *To Me*

There's not much reason to expect a connection between the town's greatest benefactor, Charles Eckhart, and a child such as I was, growing up during the Depression; but nonetheless there were three "points of contact", SUBSTANTIAL in my life, for which I remain forever grateful. "Uncle Charley" Eckhart died nearly 10 years before I was born, but I benefited from his generosity in my youth and remain grateful here, some 80 years after his passing. For What?

First, and possibly slightest, I benefited from his gifts of playground equipment to all of the Auburn elementary schools - DeSoto, Riley, and Harrison. Maintenance on the playground equipment was not a high priority in that age, but what remained when I got to it 25 years later was cherished by the kids - the low slung merry-go-round, the whirling circular swings, the teeter-totter, and the traditional swings. All were so configured that they had only heavy metal or sturdy wood parts and could endure any weather, seemingly. To a point, they were available in summer. No one seemed conscious of liability for their use, and I doubt that any parent would have thought to sue the schools for maintaining an attractive nuisance, had their children been injured while playing there. A simple, refreshing world?

The second gift (and far more substantial in my life) was the YMCA. For me, the contact began soon after I had rather poorly weathered a case of scarlet fever at the age of 8. The bloom had left my cheeks; the meat had left my bones. Good old Dr. L.N. Geisinger advised Mother to get me a membership at the Y and to let them build me up through exercise. Mother had misgivings; she was of a religious sect that was thoroughly suspicious of all other religious groups, and the name Young Men's CHRISTIAN Association, sounded "churchy" to her. But she overcame her misgivings, and off to the "Y" I went.

And what did we do at the Y in those days? Probably nothing so very different from now, but it was I who did it! One or two afternoons a week, and on Saturday mornings, I attended my "class" at the Y. along with most of the boys I knew in school.

First, we changed into our gym clothes...usually with the discovery that they were ripe for the laundry. The more effete among us might have brought their clean gear in a gym bag. If and when I remembered to bring anything unsullied, it would have been wrapped in a towel and carried under one arm. There, amid the odors of stale clothes, chlorine (the footbath leading to the showers), and ever present moisture (steam from the showers), we changed. The imminence of Snepp Snyder's summoning whistle limited horseplay. but we were pre-teen or early teen, and dignity was not our forte.

Up an adjacent stairway, into the gym, and into the clutches of our "musclemeister". Snepp Snyder, or one of his "graduate" minions, would lead us in the days activities.

"Let's open with some calisthentics."

"Ugh!"

"Now, let's run some laps around the gym."

"Ugh!", compounded.

"Now we'll choose up sides for a game of basketball,
volleyball,
dodgeball."

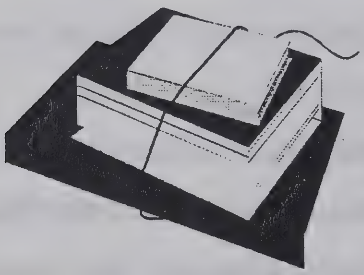
"UGH," doesn't begin to do this last choice justice. If there were 30 boys in the class, I was usually chosen 31st or 32nd. Klutz-city, me. I readily conceded all family athletic honors--at least from this floor of the Y, to my older brother. But let us but get to the pool downstairs, and I came into my own.--after the Y first taught me to swim!

So, down that same stairwell with considerably more enthusiasm, out of the reluctantly-sweated gym gear, and into the showers. "Soap, if you have it!" Rinse, and into the pool! Thinking of that pool now, it is difficult to imagine that it held so many splashers, so many belly-floppers, so much activity...so MUCH noise!...a lifeguard would be on duty--Garth Zeggenfuss, Virgil McNabb, or the like, keeping a watchful-but-bored eye on us all. Now and again, his warning whistle would sound, reminding us of some rule we had violated. I frankly don't remember anything specific now that we weren't to do. Perhaps a, Xenophon, tells of an agonizing long march by ancient Greek troops (The Anabasis). Child's play...sheer child's play compared to what I felt.

Was there anything gained of this foot-slogging mistake? You betcha'!! "Never...NEVER let anyone else set the destination OR the pace for your march. Let the Snepp Snyders or any others stride out across the world: a dear old friend (who had a similar experience) and I will retire to Del Armstrong's Grocery to do justice to a half-dozen frosted rolls instead." So there!

And did I recover by robust health? Assuredly-oh, tonsillitis a time or two, but never a serious illness since!

Another gift that has lasted 60+ years for me (and approaching 85 years for his town): the Eckhart Public Library. What his YMCA couldn't do for my love (?) of exercise, his Library did for my love of reading. Perhaps immodestly, I count myself among the literate, and joyously so. With the aid of a crew of teachers and Charles Eckhart's Library, I achieved a creative mastery of the language, found education generally pleasant, and I found the Library a treasury that invited intellectual plundering and richly rewarded you for doing so!



My library card was received the same summer that I joined the YMCA (1932). I swam in the pool perhaps 3 hours a week. I swam in the worlds of literature surely at least 3 hours a day. In those first two or three summers, I was good for nearly a book a day! I came to know every fictitious dog in Albert Payson Terhune's Sunnybank Kennels: I agonized over unkind Fate's treatment of Bob, Son of Battle: of Black Beauty, in my imagination I helped Commander Elsberg raise the S-4 and the Squalus, (and later clear the scuttled Italian ships for the ports of Eritrea.) I dived the abyssal depths with Beebe and froze with Byrd at the South Pole. In joyous reaction to a movie version of Well's The Shape of Things to Come, I consumed his Time Machine and War of the Worlds, the latter BEFORE Orson Welles and his Mercury Theater seized upon it. Oddly enough, I found no great charm in Mark Twain or Booth Tarkington, although I did read some of them. (I did like Rumblin Galleries).

Fate or heredity has endowed me with a sticky memory; Charles Eckhart's legacy helped me to stock the shelves from which I, later an English teacher, could sell good literature to the students. A great part of that stocking took place before I reached high school . There I did have good teachers, but the compulsion to plod the path of Silas Marner, The Lady of the Lake, The Idylls of the King, Caesar, and MacBeth slowed my use of the Library a bit. Oh, to be sure, it supplemented the school library in satisfaction of book reports. And, for as long as I was a youth, it was my principal exposure to periodicals. One could pour over the *Colliers*, the *Boy's Life*, the *Liberty*, and the *National Geographic* WITHOUT the prospect of Clyde Andrew G. nosing over your shoulder (as he might in the school library). And, there were certain things we were immensely curious about that only *Geographic* could show. At Eckhart, you were safe as long as you didn't do something that caused Miss Mayfield to "Shush" you.

I graduated in '42, and by the time I got back to Eckhart ('51), the era of the paperback was beginning, as was an era of prosperity. For a quarter, you could hold 50,000 words in the palm of your hand (and it wasn't due back in two weeks). I came to use the Library less and less, and more's the pity, for the Library was evolving into the media center of the community. The Staff was providing a dramatically greater service to the patron, despite an increasingly constricted setting.

I joined the Library Board in 1970 in the company of a distinguished set of trustees: Kenneth Gonser, Violet Young, Lenore Williams, and others. I learned that Charles Eckhart, when he founded his Library in 1910, had envisioned its need for growth and change and had handsomely endowed it for that purpose. Now years later, the prospect for such growth is real.

I have to believe that if there is a Divine Justice, then somewhere "Uncle Charley" Eckhart must know what he accomplished with his Library and that lovely old piece of Prairie architecture that contains it. He should receive some Divine Recognition for the immense good that ALL of his gifts have given his town. And... he should hear the happy shouts of children at play in settings that he enriched, and the contented murmurs of his townsfolk in his library.

Spin-offs: Snepp Snyder--35 years of quiet service YMCA
Legendary Librarians
The Fountain, a cast-iron millstone?

Useful source materials: Evening Star articles attending the 75th Anniversary re-enactment of the cornerstone ceremony. c. 1986

Bonafide footnote: Nothing on Eckhart Park? Unfortunately I didn't go to the Park much. I was a long way from West 11th Street, shanks-mare. I do remember the weed-befouled mill pond, the odd metal bridge over the creek (AND IT STILL STANDS). But, to a child, the whole world's a park.

Farewell to the Old Timer

When the McComb's Series began, I had no real consciousness of Ted's age. To be sure, he was no spring chicken; he could talk authoritatively about times before my birth; but, he wasn't "old" as "feeble, dispirited, jaded with life".

The publication of the McComb's Series came to a halt after the 24th article. Then, in response to the urging of the local librarian, I began the frustrating job of assembling them in a form suitable for re-publication, a frustrating experience that took not less than three years. In that process, I found that there were 6 more articles already written and suitable for inclusion, and a series of 70 more suitable subjects.

With the death of Ted, some of the above figures no longer apply. His collaboration of 16 of the first 30 articles is safe from loss. Unfortunately, of the remaining 70+ possible articles, Ted was the primary source of 20 of them. It is unlikely that they can be written now, or ever -- at least with the unique insights that Ted would have given them. No "Creek-side Boulevard", "Gas Town". "Cedar Street Underground Sidewalk". and "Rol Muhn Building Era", "Legends of the Early Fire Department", "Dance Halls", "Indiana Avenue Mini-Industries", and "Ted's Industrial Accident" -- All are either totally lost or with insufficient detail to allow them to be completed.

What did the collaboration with Ted accomplish? Certainly McComb's stated purpose of preserving interesting details of Auburn's past has been at least partially satisfied. One of my personal goals was to see that Ted, neglected in the Sesqui-Centennial Series, in the vaunted County History ...that Ted would get some of the recognition he deserved. I'd like to think that he did, although there was much more to appreciate about Ted than the public, reading these few articles, would do.

Are there significant facts about Ted that haven't been dwelt on? Consider: Louis Walter was born in 1842, Ted in 1903; father and son together spanned 151 years...awesome! Louis lived through 18 presidencies himself, Ted, 17. Ted, in a working career of nearly 70 years, worked for about 25 employers. He saw every bit of the infrastructure of Auburn built. He saw Auburn take on the stamp of an "auto town", a trait still with it. His family situation (wounded father and uncle, both) gave him a degree of compassion worth emulating. But most of all, I was impressed by how very alive he was. He was robust in his enthusiasms, his expression, in his appetite for life. When he passed on, it seemed like the loss of much more than an average man. To me, he took the best memories of an age with him. Those times cannot come again; that man cannot be with us to interpret them; but, while we had him, it was a pleasure.

Farewell, old timer.

The Best Boss He Ever Had

Silas Teddy Walters had started work in the summer of 1917, at the age of 14. He worked onward through his life to the remarkable age of 84 before being forced by age and debility to retire. So ingrained in his nature was the work ethic that after 70 years at the wheel, he felt guilty because he could no longer work. He worked for over 25 bosses in his lifetime, and this author felt that he had something unique to offer in his perceptions of bosses, work, and "The Best Boss I Ever Had".

Ted's "Best Boss"? A gentleman known to thousands who lived in Auburn in the 20's, 30's and 40's--Charlie Romeiser. For starters, ALL city departments seemed to be under the direction of one superintendent--Charlie Romeiser. Mayors were truly part-time only; it was Charlie that made the City run.

Ted's connection with Charlie lay in the City Light and Water Department; Ted was the meter reader and billing department for the entire city for at least a part of his career. He not only read your meter; he figured your charges and mailed the bill to you. Here lay considerable responsibility, and also considerable opportunity to catch flack from the public. "Your husband makes coffee at midnight, and leaves a very power-hungry burner on all night. You get a larger bill for that month. The meter reader must have made a mistake."

Charlie's reaction? Listen to Ted's account, and then launch his own investigation. Faced with his negligence, the husband is charged to muzzle his enraged and accusatory wife. And, when Charlie Romeiser made such a point with you, you co-operated...or else.

No, Charlie wasn't discourteous or threatening, but he did make it plain that casual or false accusations against city employees would be investigated, and false claimants would quickly recant or face the loss of city services. Witness the incident of Ted and the German Shepherd.

In East Auburn lived a customer with little respect for the city or its workingmen. He owned a German Shepherd of abrasive nature (given him by his abrasive owner, doubtless). Ted arrived at the home on his regular monthly route, to find the owner in the company of a few of his cronies AND the dog. Due to the threatening nature of the dog, Ted was hesitant to come on the property. The owner enjoyed Ted's discomfort for a few moments, and then smirkingly assured him it was safe. Ted quickly read the meter and was nearly off the property again when he heard one dread order, "Sic 'em!"

The dog was after Ted instantly, and attacked him in the wallet-pocket area of the seat, tearing it completely from the fairly-sturdy work pants. Verbal interplay thereafter? Ted did not comment on that; but he did report to City Hall and give the details to Charlie Romeiser.

"Go over to Schaabs and pick out the best pair of work pants. Bring me the bill."

Immediately following the execution of the above order, Charlie took Ted and they returned to East Auburn. The property owned was a bit more apprehensive with Charlie to confront. Charlie did ALL of the talking. "You will pay for the new pair of trousers for my workman. You will forevermore curb your animal." "If you are inclined to hesitate or argue at all, you will be cut off from City electricity and water immediately, and you will NOT be reconnected anytime soon. And, I will give instructions to the City Police Department to take your dog and destroy it immediately!"

Total capitulation.

"He was the best boss I ever had. You had better be right when you needed his support; but when you were, he was there behind you all the way."

It simply wasn't the money Charlie could pay you-that was small; it was the respect he gave you, and you could earn an unlimited amount. A lesson for present-day employers?

Farewell, My Old Gray Menace

A phone call from Kentucky recently informed me that a friend's Russian Blue cat, Abigail, had reached the end. Ordinarily, I'm not much moved by cats -- I had a rather "doggy" childhood, punctuated by ownership of 16 different animals and devotion to every scrap of fiction ever written about man's best friend. Then, in mid-life, I made the friendship of a lady who owned an adorable small dog and the aforementioned Abigail, whose mother must have been scared by a full bottle of Tabasco sauce. Gradually, I learned to respect Abigail (especially her claws); and after a time, even to grudgingly like the old girl. Now, I'm actually sorry at her passing; and were I there, I would have put the requisite sprig of catnip on her grave.

What, indeed was there about that cat that merited a canine fancier's affection? Well, first, she was a great bodyguard for the adorable small dog. They had their dust ups -- usually jurisdictional disputes over toys, or food dishes, or over selected knees of the owner. But, if and when outside danger threatened the dog, the cat was a more than formidable protector. On an occasion when friend Ernestine, dog, and cat were walking a few blocks from home, a large black dog hove up on the horizon with hostile intent toward Princess, the small black dog. Ernestine reined in the frightened dog and might herself have been in danger when from behind, came a small gray, fur-covered comet whose ferocity stunned and cowed the attacker. Stunned, cowed and routed the attacker, that is. I do not know if the cat actually got to the dog with those claws, but on another occasion when Bradley, the Basset hound, was attacking Sugar, (both animals of Ernestine's daughter Jenny)...well, Abigail leapt from a newell post 4' above Bradley, landed on his back, and proceeded to excavate clawsfull of hair to rather quickly reduce him to 70 pounds of quivering victim. (And, on another occasion, my sister observed Abigail back Bradley into a corner, literally, and bloody both his ears and nose.) Abigail had the number of Bradley, who outweighed her at least 10:1. So, woe betide anyone that would mess with Princess. It faced the claws of Abigail. Oh, to be sure, Abigail wasn't above taking a swipe at Princess on rare occasions, but let no other animal be so presumptuous!

Not that Abigail couldn't, at moments, be at least surprised and momentarily panicked by a bark-up from Princess. I had, on more than one occasion, a mass perforation of my knee for having had Abigail poised on that thigh when Princess barked. The cat could, of an instant, sink nearly all 20 of the claws in for purchase, and leap to safety. Healing time, about 6 weeks.

Of course, it wasn't all that often that you could get Abbie on your knee. She was not a lap cat to anyone other than her owner and Jenny, who held a nearly mystic influence over animals. The cat spent long hours on Ernestine's left thigh (Princess owned the right side). But, there was little rhyme or reason to the cat's other choices. She conferred the honor on the unlikeliest -- individuals who didn't like cats sometimes. And then, after being ignored for weeks or months on end, suddenly she would be on your lap. And, exasperatingly, sometimes she would be in the middle of the playing table during your game of cards. She rarely seemed to want anyone else's attention, other than Ernestine's, but when she wanted it, SHE WANTED IT!

There seemed to be no limitation on where the cat could or would go. You could look up from your card game to find her walking along the top of a door molding, fully 8' above the floor and on a ledge not a full inch wide. I never heard of her getting shut in a refrigerator or dresser drawer, but I am sure that she must have explored them and every other containment... and simply disdained doing anything so dumb as getting caught there.

For the most of her life, she had relative freedom to wander where she would. She was a house cat and would be back for the night, if properly whistled up. Until then, she would have explored a lovely mouse preserve behind Pat Saine's garage...or the bushes around Mrs. Cool's house. And, for a fact, she did seem to "mouse" well. And, once or twice a year, she "birded" well, as evidenced by the feathered debris left on the porch. But then, circumstances took her and her owner to live at Gardenview Apartments in Ft. Wayne, and it would have been perilous for a small-town cat to try that new environment. She was accordingly kept indoors and experienced the outside world only through the patio door glass or screen door. Circumstances again dictated a move, this time to Florence, KY and for the last 2 1/2 years of her life (17 1/2 years, all told), she was apartment bound there also. She had her excursions to the patch of sunlight on the apartment stair landing, but not again into the world of birds and mice and nature.

Moving her from one location to another had the aspects of an adventure in itself. Even a rare trip to the veterinarian was contentious and snarling and howling, howling, HOWLING!

Only Jenny could be counted on to deal with her, until the very last trip (to Florence) yielded the key. She was putting up a rare display of rancor, one which Ernestine did not wish to face for the four hours of travel time. Some happy fortune caused Ernestine to take her out of the carrier and hold her on her lap. All became serenity. For 15 years, they had not realized that it was the carrier that she hated, more than the travel!

When you face the last melancholy thought of "How will I remember her most?", with Abbie it will be as Ernestine described her very early morning ritual of the litter box, followed by an explosion into the paper grocery sack that she fancied. She must have loved the enclosed space, the rustle and rattle of the paper, and the lurking-within-and-looking-without aspect...or would it be that last time I took Ernestine back to Kentucky, and the cat clearly gave her a lecture about her absence...or *1...or *6...or *7 (below)

Abbie came into Ernestine's possession at the time of the Bicentennial in July of 1976. She was named for the sparkling Abigail Adams, and she lived up to her billing. Her owner attended a performance of the original "Cats" in London, but I don't think she saw anything superior to her Abigail in all of T. S. Eliot's cats. I suppose, not being a cat fancier myself, that there might be other distinctive cats, other cats of higher pedigree perhaps; but she was rather special to me, claws and all.

**1 Ernestine and her flotilla go for a walk*

**2 Abigail and George*

**3 Abigail and Kizzie*

**4 Abigail drinks your bath*

**5 Abigail sleeps in the crèche*

**6 Abigail sleeps on the basket in the window*

**7 Abigail and the water tap*

The Best Boss I Ever Had

In another work of this series, I have written about Ted Walters' "Best Boss". I felt that Ted's vastly varied work experience (more than 25 bosses in his 70 years of work) qualified him as some sort of authority on bosses. But then, on consideration of my own working experiences, I found that I had worked for not less than 15 high school principals, 11 superintendents of schools, and 3 other bosses in a somewhat varied work experience of my own.

Given the depth of education of those schoolmen, you might now expect one of them to be my choice; it is not so. There were among them several outstanding men, but the "pick of the litter" of bosses for me was not the product of the university, but rather an outstanding product of the school of practical experience. He was a banty of a man...a leathery little leader of the Dekalb County Highway Department, one Elmer John.

What could / did Elmer do that so impressed me? He communicated clearly. He was no product of any management schools or courses of rhetoric; he simply told it like it was, without beating around the bush. And, he told it in terms that were unmistakable.

In a world where management sometimes labors hard to conceal from its laborers the goodness of their efforts...*"Never speak well of a man you may want to fire later."* Elmer told you plainly, **AND IN THE PRESENCE OF YOUR PEERS,** if you were doing good work. Some might guess that it was a ploy to soften the fact that he had little power to reward you otherwise for good work...certainly not with money, at least, in a county job. I prefer to think otherwise, I think he was honest and candid, and that's more refreshing than it ought to be.

And, it goes without saying that, if he was open in his admiration of good work and workers, he would also be clear and direct about poorly done work. And, given his robust country background, his description of poor work and workers made the ears tingle, and surely impressed casual listeners.

I had the pleasure of working for him parts or all summers from 1950 to 1959, never for more than $1.35 an hour. I've made more, occasionally, than that since then; but I've never found his equal for loyalty to good workmen...and, incidentally, for encyclopedic knowledge of his work area. The little man could name and give salient features of EVERY ONE of the more than 750 drains, culverts, and bridges on the county road system.

That extensive system and the 30-40 workmen who seasonally attended it were his to manage... all for $4,800.00 per annum. He managed a budget of more than a third of a million dollars for such peanuts. And, when he was felled by cancer of the spine (probably the result of an injury on the job), he was replaced by a licensed engineer AND a full-time road foreman for combined salaries that likely tripled his income.

And, blessedly, he didn't look down his nose at me because I was over-educated for my summer job.

On Cousins

In another age, when families were both large and local (as contrasted to the present cautious 2.2 children *or whatever*), eventually scattering from Nome to Timbuktu, then you had cousins, seemingly on every corner. (I have an acquaintance who claims that virtually every farmstead from Bryan, Ohio back to the Indiana border contains/contained one or more of his cousins!)

In that lovely, bygone day, we kept in much better contact with our relatives than we do now. And, children did not make a federal case out of it when required, of a Sunday afternoon, to go with their parents calling on family.

My family was strangely endowed for that day and age. On Mother's side. three siblings had produced 4,2, and 0 children, who subsequently migrated (the 4) to Garrett and Elkhart, thereby rendering themselves relatively strange relatives. Of the 2, they were much older, much married, and not much fun to visit.

But, on Father's side, three siblings had produced 0, 8, and 13 children! Now there were possibilities! My sister, Betty probably preferred to visit the Aunt in Hicksville with the 8, three of whom were girls surrounding her own age. Mother probably didn't relish these visits, her relationship with the sister-in-law being somewhat abrasive. But for Father and us kids, she went and didn't complain -- *until she got home.*

The Hicksville possibilities were generous; there was a boy cousin somewhat younger than I, but he made a suitable guide to tour the barn (My Aunt & Uncle operated a dairy, along with a poultry business. As such, the barn always offered the chance of seeing rats, or something spooky). The girls I suppose, just gabbed.

The Uncle with the 13 lived on a farm in far Fairfield Township. Now there was a feast of experience. Pig pens, barns, silos, corn cribs, a windmill, a huge *(if unkempt)* front yard... and Ory and Ralph and Dallas (Nearly my exact age, the last of these)... and all friendly and willing to help the city slicker supplement his meager knowledge of the farm.

And for a summer or two, I was even allowed to stay with them for a week. No problem for my Aunt...With that many kids, you really wouldn't notice one more or less. It usually took less than the full week to restore my appreciation for city living., what with being awakened to the sound of grunting hogs below the window WELL BEFORE DAWN. Nothing like strange noises in strange places to restore alertness. After a week of stepping carefully when crossing the cow pasture, playing in a chaffy haymow, smelling the fermented air of the silo and sleeping like cordwood in a bed of cousins. I was ready for home and *two-to-a-bed.*

Father would collect me, we would rattle down the county line road to US 6, and return to slickerdom. Not, however, without some lasting memories, and an occasional sheep tick. Sixty years later, I still remember and wish for the taste of their well water, perpetually pumped by a windmill. I still can feel the warm coursing of wheat over my bare feet as we played in the grain bins (a no-no to be sure, but the cousins risked their father's ire to entertain me). I remember the mossy sides of the horsetank, and the emphatic NO-NO to anyone's desire to take a bath in that tank. (For, not only would you have been exposed, *au naturel*, to the public on the nearby road, but the animals would have probably refused to drink from a soap-infested tank.)

Now in the 90's. the farm is in the hands of the next generation. My Aunt and Uncle and nine of the children have passed on; but nice memories linger on. It doesn't look the same when I drive by on rare occasions. I guess I can't see the burdock, hear the pre-dawn swine symphony, or go barefoot in the country anymore.

I still have contact with the surviving cousins. and they are warm and family and generous. I'll bet they'd let me take an arthritic romp in the wheat bin even now!

A Proper Reverence for the Values of the Past

I used to quite irritated at preservationists, many of whom seemed to me to be rather inept at preserving their own appearance or good manners let alone real treasures! Eventually, I came to realize that I hadn't met the best of them, and upon looking about me, I spotted quite a few good souls that were doing the good work without reducing Dale Carnegie's principles to shambles.

Three for you then:

#1 The businessman who spared the Korean gingko tree for 27 years. Long, long before I moved onto 7th street, the late, great teacher of Auburn High, Robert Schooley, ~~H~~had lived at 365 W. 7th. He it must have been who planted the unexpected tree--Korean gingkos are rarities hereabouts (the only other gingko of which I knew was at Harry Hoham's spread on N. Main Street). I reasoned that only a science teacher would have been interested in planting a tree that had survived since the Triassic era, some 190 million years ago. Eventually, Mr. Schooley's family matured and distinguished themselves, Mr. Schooley himself died, and Mrs. Schooley and daughter Betty moved away. The house occupied a valuable commercial site and paid the price of it. When an insurance company decided to build on the spot, a mature gingko tree stood too far into the lot for comfort, but upon the request of an interested party, the tree was spared (even though it virtually touched the new office building).

The owner of that insurance office is not a bonafide tree lover, but he had the uncommon good sense to honor an opinion other that his own, and so the tree survived for more than 27 more years, dropping it's leaves on the roof, clogging the gutters, and eventually invading the under-floor space and damaging the building. The damage potential was so great that the tree had to be removed, and I found myself in reluctant agreement. Additionally, I find myself also pleased that they planned to take "starts" of the tree, that it's progeny may live on elsewhere. It was a good old, "old" tree; and we were lucky to have had it this many more years.

#2 At 350 W. 7th Street, there' a historic home with an interior glory that would be hard to match. Oh, I haven't been in the home in 10 years, but I know that when the Aplin's lived there (before his Harvester job took them to Springfield, Ohio), the young couple put a tremendous amount of time and energy into restoring, among other things, the walnut floors and the brass bathroom electric fixtures.

Mrs. Aplin asked me about removing the layers of paint, "Use paint remover." She did not follow my suggestion, for fear damage of some sort would be done the fixtures. Instead she STEEL WOOLED the batch back to a better finish than they had the day of manufacture. True...I wouldn't have done it that way, but I wouldn't have gotten those lovely results, either.

#3 I cherish a snapshot from a June day, 1901, of a family group in the front yard of what is now 6127 CR 56, north of St. Joe. A little girl of 4 sits in a child's chair in the longish grass, holding her cat on her lap. Her father, Edward Bills; her mother, Harriet Bills; and her brother and sister, Charles and Luella, make up the group. All...all have paid the price of mortality.

But, in the background stands the family home, a significant portion of which is still standing there in 1994. Of particular pleasure to me is the "gingerbread" decoration on the house peak that faces the road. Now the home of Forrest and Betty Bevington, the home receives loving attention and delights the preservationist. That gingerbread (decorative wood-open scrollwork) looks better now than it did in 1901. I cannot accurately estimate how old it may be, nor how many times it must have been lovingly removed and repaired, but SOMEONE CARED...*SEVERAL SOMEONES MUST HAVE CARED.* I doubt that it materially affected the value of the house--certainly not as much as the wing added to the west, nor the enclosure of the porch and it's inclusion into the kitchen--but still it was done.

And, in addition, the grass is neatly mowed.

Preservation? The best aspects of it for me...to spend your time, energy, money, and caring on something because of what IT was or is, rather than serving some bottom line of expediency, convenience, or profit.

Mama Misses a "Mean" Score in the Antiques Racket

Once in a great while, Fate conspires to place before the weak and tempted so attractive a chance to score that to resist is to deserve an instantly conferred sainthood. So it was, sadly, with Mama, the *Grande Dame*, and Uncle Bent's Ugly Paper Rack.

Uncle Bent was an ill-favored name in our family. He had eaten of my grandparents' provender repeatedly, and then, and then added massive insult to insufferable injury when he participated in the estate from which my grandfather, only a foster child, was excluded. Had my parents been classically educated, they'd have conferred *"persona non grata*-tude" on him. Years later, the only memory of him to be shared with us children was his paper rack -- a primitive trough made for the purpose of holding a small supply of newspapers or the like. That it was of solid cherry wood didn't help much; it WAS ugly, and no mistake!

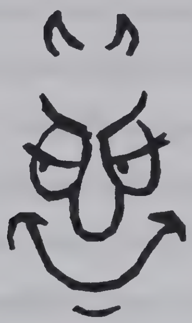
Eventually, Mama got into the antiques game, with modest success. Then, into her "shop" (actually our home) came one day a grand dame of Auburn society. Said dame was early in her antiques collecting career, and rapidly exchanging her plenteous money for knowledge, one bad bargain at a time. She was at that moment, adventuring into primitives. She enthused over Uncle Bent's paper rack, and for a stiff $25.00, became its owner. Mother let the object go with less than little regret, being associated with the hated disinheritance.

Time passed. The Grande dame grew wiser. The phone rang. "Would Mother like the paper rack back -- I mean, if it has some sentimental appeal to Mother???" Mother was far fonder of the portraits of Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Jackson on the currency than the paper rack. "No Thanks."

Time passed. Now the paper rack appeared in the stock of Tiny's Fish Bait and Antiques (Really!), on consignment. No mistaking it either--Providence had not allowed that degree of ugly to be conferred on any other paper rack maker. Price? $25.00, but probably haggle-bait. "No thanks."

Time passes, one last time. The phone rings. A domestic of Mother's acquaintance inquires if Mother would like to buy a paper rack. "Let's see it." It is brought to the shop, and it's the surreal McCoy, itself. Price? $5.00, now. The domestic, of course, worked for the Grande dame, and had been given the paper rack. Mother paid her $10.00--double her asking price--out of a confused conscience; and back into the stock it went.

Mother had a son of mischevieous bent. He suggested quickly that she ring up the Grande dame on the phone and breathlessly tell her that she (Mother) had located another paper rack. "Now you can have a MATCHED PAIR!" No go. Mother bought herself some sort of sainthood by refusing the temptation. Oh, what's the use of temptation if you don't give in to it now and then?



Mr. Miller Obeys the Law

In that bygone day of our great, great grandparents, life was so much less complicated--especially the plumbing. A pitcher pump at the kitchen drainboard was frequently the only plumbing convenience in the house, and it was connected to the reservoir that held the rainwater runoff from the roof.

Lacking true running water in the house, of necessity, the "necessary" (the outhouse, the "Chic Sale") would be found a discrete distance out behind the house. In an age noted for its genteel qualities, they were realistic and frank about this bodily function and community regulations required to lessen its possible nuisance factor.

Said community regulation required that each property owner have his outhouse cleaned periodically. Those who attended such functions were not granted any real status for their work, but you respected them, and you paid them well for their work. It was usually not necessary to have a town inspector to certify that the necessary work had been done. When it had not been done in appropriate time, every one fairly soon knew.

The neighbors of one Cooney Miller knew that he had not done his civic duty, and considering Cooney's sense of humor and temperament, they were likely reluctant to draw the law down on him. But, they eventually had to do so. Cooney was ordered to have his outhouse cleaned.

Cooney complied, with a vengeance. He had the structure set a bit aside, and into the noisome pit, he threw a lighted stick of dynamite. The result was a "cleaning" that was shared by everyone within a couple of hundred yards, as well as downwind!!!

Old Ted, in his telling of the tale, did not suggest any remedy to the situation that thereafter prevailed. (How DO you wash down a neighborhood?) As I heard of it, I immediately asked whether the neighbors had not then pulled the law down about Cooney's ears? "Naw," was Ted's reply, "They demanded that Cooney clean his outhouse, and he did!"

What a relief it must have been to Cooney's neighbors when indoor plumbing and community sewage systems became available!

This selection previously titled, "Cooney Miller Cleans the Outhouse"

Eating Out - Then

Sixty long years have passed since the heyday of the genuine homestyle restaurant in downtown Auburn. It has been six decades since the likes of Mrs. Thimlar's Tea Room, George Moore's (later Grace Krick's) Temple Cafe, A.D. Foust's Auburn Hotel Coffee Shop and Dining Room (a magnet for the elite), Dan Herrick's (later the 113), "Dad" Louis Shuman's (later Herman Tritch's) Auburn Diner, Donaldson's on the south side of the Square, Old Sim's at the bend on Main Street (Auburn's only black restauranteur), Van Scyock's on North Main, and Mrs. Stackhouse's (later Gardner's, then Roy Rhodes') City Cafe on West 8th Street.

All featured "from scratch" cooking; any would have been shamed for the use of "store-bought" pies (although some did use off-premise-baked pies--someone's home kitchen). Mashed potatoes were from scratch, and since few kitchens had labor-saving peelers, the dishwasher knew what would occupy a part of her morning hours.

Bread and rolls were likely from Ed Baker's excellent bakery on North Main, delivered in the early morning. Pete Walter's and Art Haynes' dairies made morning deliveries of milk and cream, locally produced and processed. Puritan Ice Cream of Kendallville (the ancestor of today's Atz's) ran weekly routes. Green groceries were from A&P, Kroger, or Henderson & Beerbower's on 7th St. Meats were from Swartz's Market or H&B. Dry staples were from Southern Michigan Wholesale Grocery on West 7th St. Major suppliers, such as Swift, Armour, Continental, and Sexton took orders and delivered as need be.

The meats were rarely "portioned"; ham was baked on and sliced from the bone; poultry was butchered and processed on premise-at least at Auburn Diner and City Cafe.

In most establishments, the day began near 5:00 A.M. with the starting of the cooking fires, often coal stoked. Breakfast was served the early rising factory worker or businessman, and was over by 8:20. By then, Miss Armstrong would have had her fresh-squeezed lemon juice and black coffee, and the kids would soon know it. Everywhere, dinner preparation was underway. In fair weather, someone would be peeling potatoes outside the kitchen door of the Temple on Jackson Street; for the Temple, 30 to 40 pounds of potatoes took a bit of peeling.

Pies would be going into the oven, and here did the author's Mother shine. In her career, from 1928 to 1946, it is safely estimated that she made, *by hand*, in excess of 100,000. Such

mincemeat, such sugar cream, such apple--and butterscotch, and banana and coconut cream--and fresh cherry and peach in season--and strawberry and peach with whipped cream!

Any restaurant with good pie and good coffee could attract and hold a clientele. Customers timed their arrival to coincide with the delivery from the ovens of apple (Fisher West) or sugar cream (the Fredericks). Years after her retirement, former customers remembered her skills and sought just one more encore.

Her secret? Don't play with crust (after you have bound it together with the water).

There wasn't any great mystery about menus. You knew what a given establishment would serve every day of the week. At City Cafe, Monday brought ham and beans, Tuesday was meatloaf or salisbury steaks, Wednesday was baked steak, Thursday was beef stew, Friday was fried fish or macaroni 'n cheese. Saturday night saw the 25 cent chicken supper, and Sunday was the deluxe dinner: chicken rice soup, Swiss steak or fried chicken, Waldorf salad, potatoes and the appropriate gravy, vegetable, baking powder biscuits, beverage, and pie for dessert-all for 40 cents until 1940 and 50 cents thereafter. Now and again, a specialty such as leg-of-lamb or roasted fresh ham would appear; but mostly, you could count on the same good, substantial food, quickly served and reasonably priced.

Rarely did a customer disagree about price. One "lady" knowingly ordered a 15 cent ham sandwich and refused to pay but a dime for it, claiming that no ham sandwich was worth more. She was never allowed to re-enter the cafe--and she did ask.

Sadly though, time has taken its toll. Only Grace Krick's daughter, Peg Zehner of Northway Cafe, now carries the flag of real homestyle cooking. Max Sands is hale, but retired. The Diner has become a cute little park; City Cafe sells insurance and antiques; Herrick's is in the real estate business; Donaldson's purveys light bulbs. Your best hamburger, they say, is at Cricket's Tavern-not then known for it's food. Auburn has nearly 40 "eatin' places", but only 3 or 4 are within reach of a walking downtowner.

It's a bit sad. *Sic transit glorious munchies.*

The Chef Bakes the Torte

During the early days of the Depression, my mother had the good fortune to have a well-paid, steady job as first cook at the Auburn Hotel. Indeed, she might have lasted much longer in that exalted position, had not her sense of self-worth collided with the owner's draconian cuts in wages as the Depression deepened. Until that grand rupture, I ate the most prestigious lunches of any child in the Auburn school system, since a part of Mother's working arrangement was to make a lunch for me of whatever was on the menu in the Hotel Coffee Shop and/or Dining Room.

During that time, I was sort of mascot to the kitchen, and as such, met (but did not remember much about) most of the kitchen and dining room staff: Mary Reasoner, Dorothy Dannenberg, Old Tom (the custodian), Willis Jenner, the owner (A.D. Faust, himself!), his wife (Marie Hoff Faust, herself!), Dr. L. N. Geisinger (another owner, and our family doctor), and the Hungarian Chef. My "memories" are my mother's memories of that fateful three years.

The Hotel had PRETENSIONS, it did! It was THE only hostelry and restaurant in town suitable for the dignitaries of Auburn Auto or their guests, and it strained to live up to the honor; hence, a European chef, a first cook, and two dining rooms!

The first cook was an outstanding country cook *if I do say so myself!* She could do things with pie crust that are properly legendary, but she did not make "tortes" out of it! She was a whiz at meatloaf, having learned from the great Maude Gatten of the St. Joe Hotel some 20 years before! But cooking a live Maine lobster was anathema to her. "Plain and simple and plenty" were her watchwords. For the esoteric, the unpronounceable, or the mysterious...they hired the Hungarian Chef. In the hierarchy of European cooking, the Chef was God and menials jumped at his command. It didn't work quite that way in the St. Joe Valley! Mother rankled, you may be sure.

Came the day when the Chef, just at shift time of an early afternoon (when Mother should have been going home), ordered Mother to bake a cake for an evening Auburn Auto occasion. Mother asserted her rights, told him to bake it himself, and went home to her afternoon's rest. If that risked her job, Mother had ceased to care.

The Chef stooped to the task he had assigned to Mother, and had a fling at a torte. It was to have been of many layers, Viennese style. It was of many layers, but with a peculiarity. Each layer was projected to be about 1" thick and they were, ON THEIR OUTER EDGES. Unfortunately, the middles were all rather thinner--perhaps 1/2". The total effect, when all had been united with a jam filling/binder, was not of a broad, level cylinder; but more like a Life Saver with almost no center visible.

When Mother returned to work for the supper trade, the Chef asked her to take a dozen eggs and make an icing (stiffly beaten egg whites, hot syrup, and flavoring--a delicious, very sticky, sort-of-fake-marshmallow icing). "You will have enough icing to cover all of Dekalb County if you start with whites of a dozen eggs," or words to that effect, was Mother's comment. But, she did as she was told.

The remainder of the banquet was prepared and served, and the piece de resistance was to be the cake. It was properly salvered, and headed toward the dining room when Mr. Faust himself suffered an inspiration. He had in his possession a little work of art, one of the celebrated, hand-crafted models of an Auburn car. (At times, production had not been able to keep up with demand, and to salve the impatient buyers, the precious little models were given in advance of the lagging deliveries. Such models should be valued in the thousands now.)

As the cake passed him, Mr. Faust delayed the server a bit and simply sat the model in the middle of the lake of icing--soft, gooey icing! The models were heavy, for their size. Mother hypothesized that by the time the cake reached the table, only the roofline of the model would yet be visible--sort of like cars sinking in the Tamarack Bog sinkhole, north of St. Joe, in the summer of 1912!

Mother never told what the reaction in the kitchen was to the Chef's disaster...or was it A. Donald Faust's disaster? I don't think the Chef lasted a great deal longer, but then, neither did Mother. Mr. Faust tried to cut her wages one more time, and she walked. We had her at home for a little while, and then she was hired as cook-with-no-Hungarian-Chef at the Auburn Diner by "Dad" Lewis Shuman.

I no longer ate the cuisine of the elegant (if you can imagine Mr. Faust allowing that!), but I couldn't have told the difference. Wherever I went, I was eating my mother's cooking, whatever they might bill it!

Quince Honey

As a child, I knew (as did most boys of my generation) where the best (or most accessible) fruit trees grew. I was never aware of the overt exchange of the information, one child to another, but none the less, we somehow came to know where the early transparent apples could be found, and where the ox-heart cherry tree was. Both of these were, for a fact, in the backyard of a genial neighbor, Bill Scott of W. 11th Street. But, never...never did any of us know...or even care to know...the location of any quince trees. The reason? You simply could not / did not eat a quince in hand. They were very hard, even when fully ripe; they were generally ugly, being given to strange discolorations, warts, and bumps on their banana-yellow surface; and, they were stunningly astringent. You might well have called them alum fruit!

But, in the hands of a very few jam and jelly makers, there could occur a conversion from the ridiculous to the sublime, literally. The end product, passed through such gifted hands, was quince honey. Quince honey was that sort of a perplexing product as to be simple to describe and difficult to make. It required extraordinary attention while cooking. It did!

The recipe was simple enough: just sugar, water, grated quince, and lemon juice...and slavish dedication. My mother, a gifted cook, infused it with rather more drama than necessary when she insisted that the quinces must be grated by hand--no food processor would have been allowed. But if she over exaggerated there, she was on the mark when she demanded total concentration while it cooked. From the moment it was introduced to heat, one must stir constantly. It seemed ridiculous to me, at first; but it had such a great amount of sugar compared to the water that it would burn remarkably easily. So, stir over the heat you must. And, additionally, you knew when this jam of the gods was finished by its color, and you must watch every moment for it to reach just that stage. It would begin cooking as a lemon-yellow or straw-yellow mix. As it reached boiling, gradually the grated quince would almost magically seem to disappear--they became nearly transparent in the sickening syrup. Nearing the end of cooking time, the syrup assumed much of the consistency of a good popcorn glaze, while the whole affair began to subtly shift from lemon to honey to delicate rose to a translucent pink. Then, quickly from the heat and into smallish jam glasses. As hard as the quinces were to grate, and as long as the watching and stirring had taken, you would not have been tempted to give it away in very large quantities, anyhow. For that matter, I never saw my mother make more than 4 or 5 glasses of it in a batch. It was some precious!

How precious? My mother and Mayor Jerry Oren traded gourmet items; His morel mushrooms for her quince honey.

There were added results of this preparation. No matter how carefully you had tried to contain everything, there was a tendency of everything in the kitchen to seem sticky after a batch. A meticulous, dear friend of my sisters tried the recipe out this fall. She reported with delight on the success of the recipe she had used, and with woe on the condition of her previously spotless kitchen.

But then, on a given morning, you could experience heaven on your taste buds: toast and quince honey. And if you wished to admit someone to the rarest plateau of friendship, you gave them a small glass of the honey.

I knew of few other uses for the paradoxical quince. Oh, on even more rare occasions, Mother made a sort of conserve of quince very thinly sliced quinces and hard winter pears--no Bartletts for this please. In this mixture, both the tough quince slices and the tough pear slices eventually came to an al dente consistency. I never quite understood whether you were to put it on your toast, as the world's toughest marmalade; or just eat it as a hypersweet sauce.

The other use: not really much recommended. For, it came to pass on one Halloween that Mother, who had been giving the little extortioners apples for their boodle bags, ran out of apples. She turned in her exasperation, to an overabundance of quinces and dropped these into their bags. One can well imagine the carnage as the rock-hard quince, dropped from 2 feet above, hit the tender cookies. A dear old aunt, visiting us that year, remarked to her, "Hazel, when those children find out what you've given them, they're going to throw them right through your windows!" Well, they never did...and they never will, I guess.

Hand Packed Ice Cream

In the golden reaches of my youth, there was a treat that came not very often: hand packed ice cream. It was, of course, an age that saw a much smaller amount of ice cream consumed, and what we did get our palates on was usually home made. It was infrequent that we enjoyed a cone from Staman's Drug Store, rarer yet that we saw a sundae or soda, and rarest of all, hand-packed-to-be eaten-at-home. And, I must add that my family saw the ambrosian product at least as rarely as most.

In fairness, I should say that there were certainly other fine purveyors of the cold and creamy--Hubbards, Romeisers, Russells, Coscarelli, Sealtest--but for no reason that I can put a pen on, for us it was Stamans.

Expensive? Well, somewhat more so, I suppose, because it was somewhat labor intensive...not too mention nearly double the weight and contents of the ordinary. It is likely that the pint bucket held more than a quart of our modern, aerated fluff.

However it was priced, it was fascinating to watch the soda fountain man (sheer apostasy to call such an exalted position a "jerk") execute the order. First, he took a paper pail, inserted it in a metal supporting jacket, and then began filling with an ice cream spade. Several spadefuls would be put in the bucket, and then with a heavy thrust of the back of the spade, crushed to the bottom. Good-bye, air. Repeated until the bucket was truly heaping full, the top flaps of the bucket were then folded in and it was removed by an attached wire bail. No insulated carrier was needed, for it had the consistency of frozen ivory and could possibly have survived the most meandering trip home. And, once home, how far would a pint go, servings-wise? Dense as marble, it shared out pretty well.

I am forced by age and cynicism to observe, now, that a sure route to ill-fame and fortune would be to find another method of selling air for the price that modern ice cream manufacturers get for it -- until it was hand packed.

A Little Witchcraft in the Kitchen

Let darkest Africa have its witchcraft; let the tropics have their voodoo priestesses working their old smoky magic. For sheer mystery, give me the old-time "pinch 'n dab" cook anytime. And, the results were edible!

One of my grandmothers was a pinch 'n dab artist (sadly, the other could scarcely boil water). My mother vividly recounted the mystery and the achievement of that common (for the 1880's) method of cooking.

First, "What in the world do you need measurements for?" seemed to be their watchwords. Grandmother Bills began with a large flour bowl, holding perhaps 5 pounds. I suppose the only occasion when this wasn't the foundation was for a fine cake whose flour must be double sifted (and because the batter was fairly liquid) and contained in a mixing bowl. But pie crust, biscuits, noodles, dumplings, rivels...just the flour bowl. There was, of course, an even more hair-raising foundation, in which a mound of flour was piled on a breadboard and things began from this unbounded heap. Modern European chefs can yet be seen on TV gourmet shows using this method...but the cowards usually measure out the basic amount of flour they will need.

Well, now...she would make a depression in the flour, and into that put her moist ingredients. Pie crust? Probably lard first, worked to large crumbs and then united with a minimum of water and hand mixing. Such mixtures were best kept cool, and hand temperatures DID affect them if you "wooled" them about. When the dough was united, it could be lifted out on a rolling board for final forming...or balled and refrigerated (ice-boxed, that is) for future use.

No cook was going to ruin her handiwork by working too much flour into her dough while rolling things out. You could have easily converted melt-in-the-mouth cookies to hockey pucks by such a mistake, as indeed did the mother of a friend of mine. Here, indeed, was a large part of the true artistry. That cook understood...she just came to know, the textures of her recipes. She could probably have identified, blindfolded, what the final product was to be by a single touch on the dough. My own mother's superb touch with pie dough was first a matter of feel and then confirmation by sight that the crumbs of flour and shortening were just the right size to invite the water.

Secondly, the cook understood the function of each ingredient. She knew HOW sour milk and soda did their leavening together; how yeast and sugar teamed up in bread; what the various shortenings, animal or vegetable, would do to texture. She could handle baking ammonia, poisonous in itself, to produce lemon snap cookies that are now a lost art.

Thirdly, she was an athlete of the kitchen. Baking ten or more pies of a Saturday morning took stamina. Mixing, kneading, and forming 10-15-20 loaves of bread left a girl with shoulders that Nordic Track-letes might well envy. And, not rarely did she split her own wood to heat the ovens; not rarely did she do her own wash-up without aid of Kitchen Aide. And this much effort attended simply everyday life. When the threshers came, it doubled, and perhaps re-doubled.

"Still, wasn't there more 'magic' than just that?" Yep! Consider Aunt Winnifred's celebrated recipe for hickory nut cake. "Recipe?" Yes, to a point. She must have gotten in the hands of some domestic revisionist and been forced to speak in teaspoons and cups, but only so far. This vaunted cake recipe did not offer such trivialities as oven temperatures, baking time, OR FLOUR. Nor, for that matter, did my mother's celebrated Lady Baltimore cake, the pride of her family. You just knew that you added flour until "it worked well", or "it was silky" or the dough ball "thumped just ever so".

And when was it done? Why, when a BROOMSTRAW (clean!) could be inserted and come out clean.

Move Over, Escoffier...or

Great Cooks I Have Known

People gaze on my figure abundant, listen to my chatter about foods, and frequently reach a nice, logical, wrong conclusion: that I am a gourmet. Not so, me. I am truly the size that I am ("pleasingly plump", or with "fully-proportioned figure"...or even "stylishly stout"), not because of good food that I have consumed, but rather too much indifferent or downright bad food that I ate in moments of frustration or boredom. It's not that I don't know what good food is, and what a gourmet cook can do, but I'm not their willing victim to the extent that charitable friends would think.

But, of recent years, I have become an avid watcher of the TV cooking demonstration shows--the Romanolas on Italian cooking, the Frugal Gourmet (who must preach with a fry-pan in his pulpit and would do better to abandon the latter in favor of the former), Great Chefs of East/West/Southwest/Chicago/San Francisco, and even the Great Chefs of the World. Julia Child? One of the great comediennes of the world, especially after she has been to the cooking sherry and champagne too often!

But, has there been no one in my own life that was worthy of a few Michelin stars? Indeed, I think there has been:

Maude Gatten, of the St. Joe Hotel, circa 1912--who taught my mother the one truly delectable meatloaf recipe I know.

Herman Tritch, of the Auburn Diner, who took the humble hamburger and raised it to ambrosial heights--and gave his bowling team one if they won two games of an evening!

My Grandmother Harriet Onstott Bills, mistress of the flour bowl. All common baked goods were made in an unmeasured arena of flour in a large wooden bowl. Strictly "by-touch" cooking, and *witchcrafty* to watch. I never knew the lady, but would a boy's mother lie to him? Mama said she was extraordinary.

A Sister, a Sister-in-Law, and a Cousin; who apologize profusely about their baking and turn out peach pies that Julia Child could only dream about.

A revered Aunt, whose ice-box cookies and crispy butterscotch cookies remain an indelible memory more than thirty years after her demise, as does her hickory nut cake (with NO DIRECTIONS ever recorded for her amount of flour, her oven time, or her oven temperature). "A good cook would just know, now wouldn't they?"

A mere slip of a girl from Florence, KY, who can extemporize championship results for almost anything. Just sit her before a restaurant spice cabinet and watch her repair the profaned potato salad dressing; or spin up a gourmet cheese ball strictly by instinct; or prepare volcanic jalapeno pepper sauces; or turn out a peach cobbler to die for.

And her mother, whose ability to adapt recipes to her own taste--with spectacular improvement--is unmatched.

And my own mother. I'm prejudiced, of course. But she made 115,000 pies in her career as a restaurant cook. She could have made those remarkable crusts blindfolded, literally. Her mincemeat was legendary; her pumpkin pies prodigious; her butterscotch and banana or pineapple creams a pure delight on the tongue. Secrets? Don't work pie crust beyond an absolute minimum; a two crust fruit pie must stew (and bubble out, often into the oven) to be done; home made bread must bake a full hour; the toughest chicken can be gotten done quite nicely by putting clean, large spike nails between the pieces; and the best fresh fruit pies (peach, strawberry) can be done the simplest--baked crust, sugared fruit, and whipped cream, period.

Are there gourmet cooks yet to be found? Sure...try the pie bakers at Bob's in Woodburn; the whole steer hamburgers at the St. Joe Lions at the Fair; steaks at Shopoff's, on US 24 south of Ft Wayne...or at Sam's in Blakeslee.

And a parting word for my hero-chefs on TV, "You can't make my great cooks list until you forget the caviar, the mousses, the pates, the champagne sauces. Any meal that is going to cost $50 a person is show biz, not down home cookin'".

Justice Is Served...Badly?

No crime in Dekalb County annals has ever surpassed the celebrated Sheffer murders of 1922 for dramatic detail and, in the opinion of my collaborator, for flawed justice.

Perhaps the best approach now is to consult the erudite review of the crime by former Evening Star writer, Kevin Beuret, in a series of articles written in 1970. Kevin's sources were a series of flamboyent--even lurid, and THOROUGHLY PREJUDICED articles in the Waterloo Press. Kevin clearly understood the point of the Press's prejudices, but unfortunately was unable to balance these bits of yellow journalism with material from the more stable Auburn papers, owing to the lack of archives for them from 1917 to 1932. ("A progressive new force" in local publication in that era had cleaned the Auburn Printing Company files by DUMPING their "morgue." That may turn out to be a far more pernicious swipe at Auburn then the owner's snide "Good-bye, Auburn" letter.) The Star/Courier/Dispatch articles of this era must await that fortunate moment in the future when someone finds them lining the bottom of the old trunk in the attic, or suchwise.

So what has the author to add to all of this. Memories of Ted Walters "flypaper" memory, is what.

Some of the facts of the case ARE indisputable. Two Sheffer children were killed in a mysterious explosion from beneath the Sheffer kitchen at 6:30 PM, January 6, 1921. An uncle of mine, living about a block away, ran to the scene (as did many others) to aid in the rescue of survivors. Strangely, fate seems to have selected only the parents, James and Cora Sheffer to survive, if for less than 18 more months.

The center of the blast seemed to have been in a space beneath the kitchen, where the family was at dinner. Pictures of the disaster were soon common, and showed a complete demolition of the kitchen "annex", and some attendant damage to the body of the house.

Local authorities, perhaps acting on rumors, questioned James Sheffer's brother Nie, who was reputed to be estranged form James. The authorities could not even determine the cause of the explosion--gas or dynamite. The Waterloo Press would luridly refer to the cause as an "infernal machine", but the authorities found no reason to hold Nie. According to Kevin's sources, he was completely exonerated.

The lack of a resolution of the "bombing" probably fueled the vigor of the subsequent investigation of the murder of James and Cora Sheffer. The Sheffers had restored their damaged home and gone on with their lives. Then, on Thursday evening, June 22nd, the Sheffers had attended a band concert on the square. Coming home at 9:30 PM, they had just driven into their garage when an assailant stepped onto the running board of their car and fired three instantly fatal shots into James. Two more shots were fired into Cora, who would die in about 18 hours without regaining consciousness.

Authorities desperately needed a solution to this dual assault on the tranquillity of their town. An immediate reward fund of $2500 was established. Police rather quickly picked up Nie, who had moved back to Auburn and his tent near the ice plant from the Ft. Wayne Mission only days before the murders. Questioning of the suspect was fruitless, and probably, by present day standards, illegal--perhaps as much as 36 hours of continuous grilling. Nie gave them nothing; but innuendo and speculation. NEED gave them the reason to bind him over to a Grand Jury, which on October 3rd obediently indicted him for trial.

The trial was venued to Steuben County, and Nie was brought from the Allen County Jail, where an apprehensive sheriff had placed him for safety. The trial began on December 4th; the death penalty was sought. Nie had grudgingly accepted the legal representation furnished by his father, and he steadfastly refused to plead guilty. The single substantial piece of evidence against Nie was a pair of guns found buried in a creek bed near his tent. Ballistic tests were not then a part of forensic justice; ownership was never proven.

The jury seemingly had no trouble with the circumstantial evidence; they returned a verdict of "guilty of second degree murder" on December 16. Shortly thereafter, he was permitted to bid his father farewell, to tour the murder site, and to begin what was truly a life sentence. He died in prison.

And the justice of it all? Ted Walters was asked if he thought Nie had been guilty. He replied that many people were convinced of his innocence, but that the law needed a quick, settling conviction. Nie was a derelict; deaf; estranged from "good" society. He was, for that age, an ideal scapegoat.

And now? The original house still stands. Most of the principals and onlookers have gone to meet their maker. On some Divine level, justice has perhaps now been done. It didn't seem to have been done on this level in 1922.

Neighbors along 11th Street, a scant 10 years later, were willing to point out other nearby folks who had not gotten along with the Sheffers, and to express their doubts about the "justice". But, sadly, either no one cared to speak up in 1922, or -- no one cared to hear them.

The author confesses to being a shameless devotee of clever detectives, whether Miss Marple or Columbo. Surely Nie Sheffer would have benefited from their type of service, asking the important questions, "Who stood to benefit by the crime?", "Whose guns, and why so ineptly close to Nie's tent site?" "What got Father Sheffer the confidence in Nie to pay for his defense against the charge of murdering his other son, James?", "What of the known animas of a nearby family?" and "With the Waterloo Press fanning the flames of pre-judgement, how much chance of a fair trial did Nie really have?"

Death Came In Threes

Death and superstition are subjects that we small children knew little of, but older children and adults found our innocence and trust irresistible and soon filled us with fear, misgivings, and oceans of misinformation. Take the belief that, Death comes in threes! and the early 30's on Phillip Street.

Sadly, the first juvenile death that introduced us to the dreadful statistic was that of a 5 year old girl. Her mother was a driven housekeeper who did not let her three children play in the house, for fear that something would be soiled/disordered/given the "lived-in" look. Accordingly, tragedy struck in a neighbors barn, where several children had gathered to play with some tubes of rubber cement, garnered from the scrap heap at Auburn Rubber. Ignited, it burned with a garish orange flame. The little girl tried to extinguish it by stepping on it; her silk summer pajamas exploded into flame; she died at 5:00 that evening.

The anguish of her parents scarred the souls of all parents who saw it. Years afterward, they spoke of her father running on foot to an uptown drugstore to get the suffering child a glass straw so that she might assuage her thirst, as her life literally leaked out through her charred skin. Hospitals? Burn units? Not in the 1930's--Sanders Hospital would not come along for a couple of years yet.

And, in less charitable moments, we wondered if her mother might not have preferred a more disordered house and a child who could play under her watchful eye.

That death introduced us to the "Death comes in Threes" superstition; and then, the boy who lived two doors south went out to play in the tree house. That tree house would have been located almost exactly where the former Heck's store is located in West Auburn. After working diligently for his mother, cleaning a cast iron kitchen stove, he went with friends to play in the woods. He lost his grip, fell head first, and broke his neck.

Funerals in that age were held in the home. The lad, as the little girl, was laid out in the parlor amid a bank of flowers. We neighbor kids were taken by our parents to the calling and to the funeral. Two overwhelming impressions linger: His mother plaintively explaining to all that the soot from the stove was so embedded in his skin that they could not scrub his hands clean, and the dreadful incantation, "Death comes in threes".

The remainder of the summer was lived nervously by us kids as we waited for the ax to fall. It never did, and gradually faulty memories and juvenile enthusiasm freed us of the malaise; but even yet, let two deaths occur close together and I will read the obits with a bit of foreboding.

The Little Rude Schoolhouse

In the fifth decade of this century, I was evicted from the Groves of Academe and sent to ply my trade in the boonies of education. I had no lofty goal of teaching in such metropolitan splendor as Fort Wayne...or even Auburn. I was not exactly the nubbins of my class, but I took the second job offered me, Van Buren Township, LaGrange County, teaching grades 6-12, English. True, I had trained to be a scholar of history, but all such teaching positions were held by the Toynbees of the roundball--basketball coaches! (True in most schools, but not in Van Buren Township, hereinafter known as Scott, for the hamlet in which it was embedded. In Scott, it was a nice maiden lady of such advanced years that she knew every guilty secret in the township and seemed to have been there since the last Ice age).

The class load? English 6, Reading 6, English 7 & 8 (or 8 & 7), English 9 & 10 (or 10 & 9). and English 11 & 12 (ibid.). *Revealing explanatory note: Lacking sufficient enrollment to invest a teacher in just one grade at a time (save for the large 6th grade), "double years" were taught, in which a student might very well have material presented to him in the sequence, 8, 7, 10, 9, 12, and 11. Say good-bye to any true sequential grammar.* And, oh yes; as a sop to my social studies preparation, I did have one class of History 8.

Did I ever have a class of history 8! History 8 replete with at least 50% Amish children who were totally resistant to the "round world" theory, to the conventional stimulation of good/bad grades, and to continuation of education after their 15th birthdays. I had, I say, I had Millers and Strocks galore; I had Mary Esthers and Mary Ellens and Marthas to conjure with...and an Elva and an Ella.. None of the Amish were a problem to deal with, save that when they had authority such as Ella/Elva's father, the Amish bishop, to rely on, who would then believe a teacher with such ridiculous ideas? So, I lost the round-world argument.

If they were resistant to history, they were quite receptive to English instruction. Grammar did NOT faze them, particularly when I floundered into a mechanical formula for constructing verb forms. They seemed to grasp and even enjoy (some of the, at least) being able to construct a Passive Voiced, Past Perfect Progressive: "they had been being taught" for sometime in this fashion before we finally got a text from the County Superintendent's precious store of textbooks. Not then, but rather late thereafter, I came to wonder what (if anything) valuable I had given them. Do they now move about the placid tenor of their days noting, "I wake up. I arose from my bed...I shall do my morning chores. I have slopped the hogs. I had given the horses oats. I shall have seen the sunrise by breakfast time. I am using Mr. Stackhouse's verbs. I was coming along before I met him. I shall be forgetting all of this soon, etc., etc., etc........."

I doubt, however, that anything so demonstrated the dearth of my preparation and the height of a school's expectation as the traditional class plays. "He teaches English. He will do the plays." That possesses the same wobbly logic as saying that, "He breathes. He will play the trumpet fanfare." Maybe he does teach English surely he breathes; but, DO NOT BOOK A BROADWAY THEATER FOR ANY SUBSEQUENT EFFORT...YET!

But then, blissful ignorance reigned, and for 4 or 5 weeks, I was King of the gym. (Note: plays could not be allowed to compete with basketball for the use of the Sacred Arena, and so were either out of the way by November 1st or not on the boards until after the Sectional BB Tourneys. *And in the first 10 years of my career, my schools never survived their first game of sectional play.*

Oh, but drama looked easy. Three rehearsals of Act I, three of II, three of III, three of the entire play, one dress rehearsal, and Opening/Closing Night! The hardest part? Just holding try-outs and having to tell students that they hadn't made the cast. You could somewhat assuage their disappointment by asking them to serve as a part of the production crew, but a starring role was what they had had in mind.

You passed out the playbooks (always a non-royalty play). You required them to know an act by the first rehearsal, but in rare cases did they ever really do it. You didn't even know what "blocking" meant. You little understood dramatic structure yourself, and you cringed in later years when you came to know just how much you HADN'T KNOWN then. But, yours was the only game in town, and you were blissfully ignorant of the artistic atrocity you wrought, and YOUR PUBLIC WAS, BY THE GRACE OF A PROVIDENT GOD, YOUR EQUAL IN IGNORANCE!

On went the production! Tickets were sold, a few. Posters were made, badly. Scenery was built, rickety. And since the schools rarely paid for this UN-valuable service, the only recompense was the traditional cast-present-to-the-director. Cuff links, bric-a-brac, and (in one case), a shirt with metallic thread-that-scratched (and made me afraid to wear it in stormy weather.)

My legacy of significant theater? Forget it. We did "Comin' Around the Mountain" and "Hillbilly Courtship" and "Second Floor Front" (The hero is a poet, set in a second floor sitting room that required a piano to be taken on and off stage between acts, replete with topical jokes of the 1910 period). As elegant as we ever got was "Seventeenth Summer" and the principal criticized because "We prefer our plays funny here at Leo!" Never did we assay to "significant ", to "redeeming social value", or to "dramatic milestone".

But...but...but. We did generally have fun. We did clean, funny, inexpensive plays. And, I quit after 10 years when I learned how far I was from good (and how far from appreciative even the larger schools were of so much extra-curricular effort.) The thrill was then gone, but some nice memories still linger on.

Memories such as:

> Lois, of Appalachian background, who joyously taught all of the cast members dialect for "Hillbilly Courtship" and they loved it. It took months for them to give it up after the play had become history.
>
> Gailanna, who sat in the audience and cried at the sad passage at the end of the second act of "Seventeenth Summer".
>
> And Rita, the understudy/promptress, who stepped in the leading role. (ibid.), and carried it off so very well, including improvising dialogue to rescue a cast member from a missed cue.
>
> Herb, who got trapped in an offstage room behind the piano we had moved off-set between acts.
>
> Maynard, who deliberately ad-libbed fully 15 minutes to pad a scene with Mike E.
>
> Joanne, who extorted a new wardrobe from her father, telling him that the director required her to have new clothes for the play.
>
> And finally, Ginger, who answered Duane's onion-y kiss on Friday night with her own garlic kiss on Saturday night....at the director's suggestion.

Would I do it over? Not really, but I do enjoy the memories, and I still have a couple of pair of those cufflinks.

Everything Old Is New Again?

So went the title of a popular song some years back, and so goes the tenure of daily life. So often I've found that what we tout as a great new discovery is only a variation of something old and nearly forgotten. We go into orbit about food dryers, not remembering that very large, double layered, hot-water filled, drying pan that graced every home at the turn of the century. Surely, new ones are electric and forced air, but at a hefty cost, too.

So it was that I, who have acquired the immobility of the aged and arthritic, was so pleased to discover local markets that would prepare an order and put it in the trunk of my car, accepting my check through the window, and save me the misery of concrete and tile "Knee killers". And then, I remembered the shopping patterns of my ancient youth--patterns that saw only infrequent shopping expeditions to the center of the town. Quite literally, the stores came to us! The numerous peddlers and huckster wagons met us virtually at the doorways of our homes. In season, the farmer might drive slowly down the dusty streets, offering his produce (particularly muskmelons, I remember) from door to door. The egg lady came weekly, milk was delivered in glass bottles to the doorstep, usually long before the householder was stirring. The Larkin lady and the Watkins man...and the ubiquitous Fuller Brush Salesman let you shop in your very own parlor (more likely, kitchen!). Eventually, Avon came calling; and of course, you had several friends who did Knapp or Mason or other brands of footwear.

But, it was the huckster wagons that reach farthest back for me. I can recall one being horse drawn (later to be replaced by a Model-A Ford truck (with a body probably made in your own hometown, it was easy to purchase just a motor and chassis and have a local carpenter/blacksmith/handyman customize what you needed.). It was usually designed with one side having a large, horizontal shutter that could be raised to expose the stock to view. It could not be equipped with the barrels of flour, crackers, and the like of the downtown groceries, much of it had to be, in a sense, pre-packaged. It could carry no goods that would require extended refrigeration, hence little meat or dairy. Considering the roughness of the streets and the stiffness of suspension, eggs would have been in peril in such a case. But, there are still lots of staples in could and did carry. And, it brought scandalous *non-home-made* bread! In the age when household drudgery was most women's lot, the labor-intensive making of bread was a given.

But, some of the more daring foreshadowed their coming independence by buying...scandalouly buying *at 7, 8, or even 9 cents* loaves of BAKERY bread! Of course, it could not taste as good, nor be as filling, as your mother's best; but the texture was finer, the crust was thinner, and for the moment, you were on the cutting edge of technology--or were you? Soon they would slice it; wax-paper it; cinnamon-and/or raisin it and even identify it with some elegiac name--Wonder, Sunbeam, Holsum.

What finally became of the huckster wagons? Mom and pop stores cut into the business some, but the widespread ownership of cars made downtown shopping much easier, leading to larger groceries and supermarkets and hypermarkets. The wagons hung on a bit longer in rural settings and resort areas, but finding one now would be a true curiosity.

Or would it? Can't you still get an intellectual meal from the Eckhart Library Bookmobile? It's really not so much different from Christopher Moreley's horse-drawn bookstore in his charming novel, "Parnassus on Wheels". *Want a real adventure? Try finding "Parnassus" on the shelves of ANY library.*

Holiday Hoopla

I cannot really recall all of this hoopla about the Holidays in the good old days. Surely we had holidays, but I think that they were rather more possessions of the family, the church, and the patriot; rather than the toy and greeting card manufacturers. I suspect that days are all rather much the same to children: everyday a sort of holiday.

Neither can I recall any particularly ecstatic experiences with those holidays that we did note. This, perhaps, is the result of having a double molar pulled on Thanksgiving Day of 1933...not an auspicious beginning to the family feast (which was rather likely centered on one chicken divided among 6 people.)

But surely, the presents of Christmas? (Let's talk Depression days here, shall we?) Presents were few, far between, and stultifyingly practical. A dear aunt from South Bend remembered us each year, but my memory of her presents is mostly woolly itches. And, my one surviving grandparent had not less than 26 grandchildren to span; ergo, handerkercheifs.

And by golly, our schools didn't make much of holidays, either. I've no memory of coloring turkeys or pumpkins or Christmas trees to put in the classroom windows. With my talents, perhaps that's just as well. I do recall, however, in the Harrison Elementary that there was a tree located just outside of the door of Principal Della McGinnis's office. That's 12 rooms, 300 kids, and (1) one (1) tree, located where we (of the north end of the building) dare never approach (except under fearful stigma of a principal's office mandate).

Day before Christmas vacation dismissal--*C*E*R*E*M*O*N*Y*

All hands were assembled in the central hall around that tree for...for...for I don't quite remember what, except that it entailed carols, and particularly, "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing". That's 312 assembled voices AND Miss McGinnis in an avalanche of song (Well, not really an avalanche. More like 312 boulders, rocks, and pebbles bouncing down a mountainside, each at its own pace and on its own tangent, but generally headed for the bottom.)

"And Heaven and na-**chur** sing,

And Heaven and na-**chur** sing," And, she stopped us dead in our tracks, carol or no carol, for a diction lesson. Egad! Dismissal awaited!!

"No, NO, **NO**!!!!! And Heaven and nay--tyure....nay--tyure sing,"

When you have been arrested in full melodic flight by Della McGinnis, perhaps Nature could sing, but most of us were so cowed that, at best, we lip-synched it the rest of the way. And, to this day, I'll dodge that carol when I can. Nay--tyure will just have to make it on its own.

Making W. A. R. In Auburn

I can't ever recall Auburn being a hotbed of talent. Oh, I do remember one dance studio booking the Court Theater for their annual extravaganza, but there were no budding Ruby Keelers in that group, I'm afraid. (Once, one did have an accident that might have suggested a career of Gypsy Rose Lee, but they never allowed that accident to occur again, you may be sure!)

Similarly, I am sure that Catherine Cornell slept soundly knowing the competition that faced the footlights in Auburn. But, from time to time, we had momentary flickers of hope, carefully fanned to life by the Traveling Producer/Director. He came through town every few years (at long enough intervals that his last production could be lent a rosy hue by charitable memories.)

He would have in his hands the requisite scripts, usually of some vapid work that either didn't merit royalty payments or whose proper owner didn't pursue such payments. Such a script was The World's All Right!, or "W.A.R.". Did that somehow titillate the playgoer; did it somehow evoke interest in its similarity to Karel Capek's classic R.U.R? Who knows? May be it was supposed to translate to stagy, arty, avant garde. Whatever!

The casting call would go out. A few brave souls would appear for try-outs, possibly urged on by their drama or music coaches (or, could we have had Stage Mothers, even in Auburn?) I am sure that the shrewd eye of the director analyzed every aspirant for the ticket-selling potential. It was a musical, so a pianist was retained. Books were distributed, and production was underway. With a minimum of money and an avalanche of contribution, sets were built (one, usually), costumes were created (at the performer's risk), and the publicity juggernaut was set in motion.

Ads in the local paper were reasonable, but they did cost money. The promoter frequently brought with him a supply of half-printed fliers, needing only the date of the production, the theater, and price of tickets. I suspect they would be charged against the final gross at a rate very profitable to the producer. So, too, would the playbooks, a royalty fee (if he could make you believe that he actually had to pay one), and **HIS SERVICES.**

Hobe Hart rented him the theater for the performances. The practice, for which Hobe would never have given up "prime time", had to be held in lodge halls, gyms,...wherever.

Then, within a fortnight of the performance (s), the urchins of the town hit every house in town with one of the fliers. We walked and walked and walked and.................... But our reward! Ah, our reward! One, count 'em, one REDUCED PRICE TICKET. Or, if we beefed too loudly, a comp ticket in the very least desirable part of the house.

Packed houses? Hardly, for it was the Depression. Profit to the sponsoring organization? Not much, after the promoter collected all of his charges, most of which would have somehow overrun.

But the priceless experience! Is to laugh! After all of that work passing out the fliers, I cannot even remember the performance. I remember the ingenue, but only because she lived next door to me on Phillip Street. (And she WAS pretty, and she was nice, and she had a nice small-town talent, and she did marry happily, I think.) The male lead? Well, he never replaced Dick Foran as my boyhood hero, so no great impression there, either. The Star was likely charitable in its review. Hollywood did not come calling. We survived it all likely no sadder, no wiser, and no more culturally enriched than we had been.

Why don't these cultural mountebanks operate throughout the land now? Possibly because the producers are now TV executives, turning out such redeeming social-value productions as Dukes of Hazzard, Beverly Hillbillies, Petticoat Junction, Green Acres, Hee Haw, and Laugh-In. Yes, that must be it!

Pin Spotter Hi-Jinx

If God had intended me to be an athlete, he wouldn't have so discouraged me by giving me a brother who could do almost everything better than I! He was the *three-sport* athlete in high school; I wilted after less than two weeks "out for football"; I didn't even hazard basketball or track.

But then, Cal Grosscop and Harry Davidson built the bowling alleys in 1937. In a fashion I came into my own. No not the star quality...but adequate performance at least. I began to bowl early--13, and I continued with a degree of pleasure and proficiency for 35 years.

Five, or six, or seven nights a week, I haunted the lanes. I bowled when I could afford it, sat pins, when allowed, to pay for my addiction, and presently became the foul caller. This was a position of some responsibility, some power, and some peril for a teenager. No one, but NO ONE, agreed with the foul caller if it had been THEIR toe that crossed the line! By the end of that career in 1942, I was the best/worst grumbled-about kid in town.

My companions in pin spotting were an interesting and instructive lot. Almost all were older than I, giving me a chance to profit by the experience of my elders: elders like "Droop", Big John, Terry the Turk, Goldie, "Bat", Lefty, and the star of stars, "Stinky".

What might I have learned? "Droop" gave me a heart stopping demonstration of double-clutching-on-ice one winter's day as we journeyed to a match game with the Calhoun Street pinspotters. It must have produced a double hernia for our guardian angels. Stinky adamantly insisted on sliding on his right foot (he was right handed), a NO-NO of Olympic proportion for a bowler....until the inevitable day when her should have broken his ankle (but only knocked himself on his backside).

And some one--or several of them--staged the infamous "Pin-Life" white-out of Auburn High School. Bowling pins suffered the inevitable wear-and-tear of being bashed about by 16 pound bowling balls. Their useful lives could be extended by mounting them on pegs about a metal funnel, and pouring over them a restorative lacquer called "Pin Life". Eventually, a layer of dried lacquer would build up on the funnel, a layer that had a most interesting quality: it would burn with a cheerful orange flame, which, if extinguished, continued to emit a dense, white smoke. DENSE...**DENSE**, that is!

How dense? Worse than the worst "pea-soup" fog. So bad, that when a chip was put in a mail box at the foot of the bowling alley stairs, it completely stopped traffic on the stairs (No one would take a chance in that "can't-see-your-nose-on-your-face" milky cloud.)

So....take a good-sized chip of Pin Life, ignite and extinguish it inside your old flip-top desk in the study hall, just as classes are changing, and get ready to call off school for the afternoon. In five minutes (before the next teacher was on the scene) the middle of the room would have disappeared. By the time superior authority had been summoned and has pontificated the situation, the large study hall was as though filled with milk, vision-wise. A school, in which continued operation was sacrosanct, ground to a complete halt.

But the peril of apprehension? Very slight likelihood, for Pin Life burnt totally and without ash, and likely without heat scars. And besides, this wasn't Hercule Poirot who was going to be looking for clues.

If it were so successful, why wasn't it done more often? Probably the perpetrators were other, bolder types, near to graduation. Most of them would have cleared the halls by mid-1940, and the remainder were not made of such adventurous stuff. I'd like to suggest that I was, but I simply wasn't; and so, I admired, but never had the nerve to emulate them.

You Can't Believe Everything You've Heard-

-Even Here!

There used to be a wry joke in my family that my older sister could remember things that had happened even before her birth. We partly attributed it to the fact that Mother had married at 16 and this sister was the firstborn, making only 18 years between their ages. My sister had a lively imagination, and likely the tendency that very imaginative children do have to easily confuse the creations of their minds with reality. When she contradicted Mother about some point of family history, it was rather more like contradicting an older sister, and I fancy that some things did seem quite real to her that were simply fancies of her lively mind.

As time went on, I found that the sister wasn't the only one to have that quirk. I had SUCH a vivid memory of my mother, in effect, being a hot car artist. Explanation? When I was about 4, Mother loaded the two youngest children in the family Model T and drove us into the country to pick cherries at an abandoned farmstead. The single structure standing was a sort of bank barn, and Mother parked the car facing the main doors. She picked; we played, rather mindlessly. Sometime during the afternoon, another party that had also been picking cherries left in their Model T. For reasons unknown to me, Mother moved our Ford from the barn to the location formerly occupied by the other party's Ford. When the time came to depart, to our surprise, we got in a Ford (ours) in a strange location. I cannot recall if I made any point of the mystery, but as years went by, I came to have a stronger and stronger feeling that my mother had stolen a car that day. Fortunately, I got old enough and smart enough before it ever occurred to me to discuss it with Mother, saving me the embarrassment of admitting my childish error. I do recall, also, a slight feeling of loss that we did not have such a colorful character in our family as Ma Barker.

In preparing this series, I found myself at times in danger of raising an eyebrow at various contributions. I tried, where I could, to cross check any of the more outlandish incidents. I found often, to my delight, that they were actually quite true as related to me. Where I had any doubt, as in what I took to be generic industrial legends (see Orval and the Tack Hammer), I expressed my reservations to the reader.

I think the strange-story-well-verified that I most enjoyed was that of Art Smith landing in Auburn. When Ted told me of the event...and particularly landing between the Madden house and the Renaissance Corporation, up went the eyebrows. But then, from the memoirs of Willard Maxwell came the fact that his father had taken him, as a 6th birthday present, to see Art Smith land in Auburn. And then, Roger Grogg confirmed that Art Smith landed in Auburn twice! And finally, from the Art Smith memorabilia in the possession of Herbert Wertman of Portage, Michigan came a lapel tag for the occasion sponsored by the Victor Joe Cigar Company of Auburn and by candidates for auditor and sheriff in the election of 1912. Four different sources verified that on October 12, 1912, the Bird Boy did indeed land on the old baseball field on East 7th Street in Auburn. I could well believe, and report, that Ted did cajole a quarter out of his mother, Jennie Walter, and run from his home near the junction of CR40A and CR35 all the way to the field to pay, get in, and touch the plane. Ted was vivid of imagination and florid of speech, but most of his tales were verifiable.

Orval And The Tack Hammer

An Industrial Legend

In an area school of yesteryear, there was a drinking fountain known distastefully as "Old Facefull". No matter how carefully you manipulated its control, that centerflow fountain literally would give you a facefull of water. Then, mopping your brow and jowls, you would step back to enjoy the watery surprise of the next user.

Of a similar, half-humorous bent was the onlooker of Orval and his Tack Hammer, a fixture of the upholstery shop at Auburn Auto. Orval, like most upholsterers, had become adept at the use of the magnetic tack hammer, but with Orval, there was an additional difference...Orval had a wooden leg and a grisly sense of humor. He was a true peril, albeit psychological, to the unwary.

Let an unknowing greenhorn wander into the upholstery department, and Orval set his grisly joke in motion. He would feign difficulty with his pants cuff, cuss a bit, and then lean down and tack the offending cuff to his leg. The effect on the onlooker was galvanic...it often inducted fainting or nausea on the spot.

Then, when the no-longer-innocent recovered from his embarrassment, he too would await the arrival of the next innocent in the department.

Orval did not, however, have the measure of every man at Auburn Auto. Orval was also a notorious tobacco sponge. Let you but whip out your pouch of Redman or Mail Pouch chewing tobacco, and Orval imposed on you for the loan of a chew, which history records would never be repaid. Orval got his comeuppance when one of his fellow workers grew tired of the sponging. In the presence of a small audience of his peers, the avenger whipped out the pouch. Like Pavlov's dog, Orval performed as expected...he asked for a chew. The chew was given, and then when Orval had his chew well under mastication, the owner of the pouch cleared his throat and spat mightily in the pouch, remarking that he always did that to keep the tobacco moist. It was said to have had a tonic effect on Orval's manners, and he was reputed to have stopped borrowing tobacco.

The stories of Orval were told me by me father, who along with several thousand other men were among the few hundred men who worked for Auburn Auto. As time went by, I came to wonder whether these tales weren't typical or common industrial legends and weren't a sort of generic humor that had taken place everywhere. Could they have been told at every plant, with just a different cast?

Perhaps the tale of the greenhorn and the anvil is one of those. This time, the setting is Auburn Rubber, in the maintenance department. The well-muscled workers are gathered around an anvil, daring each other to pick it up by the horn, one-handed, and carry it off. Consider the shape of the horn, and the weight, which might be in excess of a hundred pounds. While they were bragging, but not demonstrating their own strengths, a downy-cheeked country boy walks up, one-hand's the anvil, and walks off with it, leaving a pool of silence behind him.

And, Father told of picking up another worker and setting him down in a wheelbarrow load of fresh cement. But....now I wish I could have checked Father's overalls for cement residue, especially the seat!

Mischance on a Soft Spring Evening

As I write, it is one of those lovely, misplaced days of spring (Days such as this should be saved and metered out to us during the dreadful spells of winter). The temperature is in the low 80's, the doors are all opened; the onslaught of bugs hasn't yet begun. It's sort of like the lovely day in Raintree County when the young hero lies beneath the golden raintree on the most perfect of summer days, watching the golden rain of blossoms about him.

Well...at my age, everything reminds me of something else, and such lovely days as this take me back to the 1930's on 11th Street, and to my father and the vast (even then!) generation gap. Children, of course, understood the uses of lovely spring/summer weather and the long evenings---playtime. And if the long day of "the work of youth, play" had somewhat sated one, then perhaps your father could be prevailed upon/coaxed/wheedled/begged to take you for a ride. I don't for a fact, remember that going for a ride was all that thrilling, but on rare instances, the ice cream cone that sometimes capped the evening was. It would be, hopefully, Borden-Furness vanilla, in a rolled-cookie cone of ambrosial effect. From Stammans Drug Store, naturally.

So...the campaign would be planned. No infractions of parental law that would be reported to Dad when he got home. No yammering or sparring at the supper table. Then, spring the question and hope for fortune. On the best of evenings--perhaps three or four times a summer, it worked. Mostly it didn't because of gardening or a tough day at the factory (Father worked in maintenance at Auburn Rubber Company, and at one time, ten hours a day, seven days a week, for a straight-time 30 cents an hour! He had reason to be tired!). Or worse than a tough day, grinding valves!

It was an age when many men repaired their own cars. Most men would have considered it effete or profligate to have a filling station change their oil. Minor repairs you did at home. Quite a number of men, as was my father, were adept enough to do major repairs on their cars, also. (Now, they are so electronically complex that only your 9 year old VCR programmer could fix them!)

So, sometimes before you could even pop the question to Pop, he would have disappeared into the garage. Eventually, he would emerge carrying the 4-cylinder block to his engine (My father was 240 pounds of solid muscle and could manage the feat without strain.). Into the house he would come, and the oily, offending, highly-encrusted-with-carbon-deposits-thing!

Braced against untoward movement, it would be situated on the table. I suppose that there must have been layers of protection between it and our table, but I don't remember--or may be I don't CARE to remember them. Then Father would take a brace-and-bit common to carpentry, put a peculiar bit in it (shaped on its end like a broadened cone, anoint the bit and the valve seats with a grinding compound, and begin the monotonous swing-reverse-swing-reverse motion that would, with a couple of evening's work, restore the valve seats to mint condition. It did take too, too, too many evenings to grind those valves. It wasted (juvenile view) too, too, too many fine evenings. From the pip-squeak point of view, it was a tragedy.

That awkward chore frequently led to other time/evening consuming repairs on the car. It seemed forever, but at long last, it could all be reassembled and tried out. Then....THEN perhaps, we could go for a ride.

Time passed. They stopped burning gasoline that did such a carbonizing number on the engines. Cylinders grew more numerous; engines more complex. Nowadays, if I heard of a man grinding his own valves, I'd wonder how he ever got them fouled to begin with, and then I'd hide myself in his garage to recapture the tragic moment from my youth. And then, I'd take myself for a ride. But, sadly, no Staman's, no Borden-Furness, no cookie cone. We just don't live "in the best of all possible worlds" anymore.

Mud Between The Toes?

A Pleasure Of My Youth

There was a lovely age when glass bottles won you a 2¢ refund if you took them back to the grocery. They did not end up, broken and waiting like a curse for the unwary "bare-foot boy". In that far off age, it was still safe--no it was absolutely mandatory to walk in the mud after a summer's rain, and barefoot, of course!

The streets, most of them, had not been disciplined with concrete or asphalt. Many had never even been graced with gravel. and those were our streets of delight. Passing traffic would, through a dry period, pulverize the surface and create the requisite potholes. Then, let fall a warm summer shower. Water and dust companionably became warm, oozy mud...a pedal paradise! No "off with the shoes" was needed--we hadn't had them on since school let out in mid-May. Into the puddles, and let that warm, wonderful mixture bring bliss between the toes. The only thing that could have improved the situation was to have had a dozen toes per foot!

"Ugh!", cry the effete! "Baloney", say I. If it is so stylish and expensive for haute Europeans to go to the spas for just such mud baths, then how absolutely clever of the American urchin to find the same pleasure, and so much cheaper!

And what other forbidden pleasures partook we of? Wait, just you wait for a scorching hot summer day--one that literally melts the tar in the road surface and makes it to trickle. Locate a pool of the quasi-molten tar, grab up a gob of it, brush off what you can of the attached sand and road debris, and there you have it, a suitable substitute for Black Jack chewing gum! Oh, it may have had a somewhat off flavor; it may have tended to polish the teeth a bit much--if you hadn't gotten out all of the sand; but you just couldn't beat the price...and it gagged the girls and your parents pretty good, too.

The Silver Marshall and Me

To this day, I don't know why my parents bought the Silver Marshall, an expensive console model radio, back there in the 1930's. We weren't poverty stricken, mind you, but THAT was a luxury, sure enough! With three kids in school (the oldest sister had by then graduated), there couldn't have been that much extra money around. (It is true that once or twice in their married lives, my parents HAD "Splurged"--a new Model T Ford *in pique, after Grandmother had let another son have the family car on the death of Grandfather*--and usually at Holiday Time when Father would come home with a turkey AFTER Mother had already purchased a chicken for the festive dinner.)

Why a new radio?

Could it have been the memories of me, going next door to the Faylors on Phillip Street and absorbing their time, peanuts, and (probably) patience while I listened enchanted to "The Burns and Allen Show". Splendid folks, the Faylors: never a complaint about the 8 year old lounge lizard, stretched out on their davenport, eating their blanched peanuts. Their children were all late-high school, or older, perhaps they missed the patter of little feet...or something.

So at 333 W. 11th. a new piece of furniture was installed in the living room...the generally cold, dark living room. The house was 1 1/2 stories, with a small crypt under part of it and heated by a kitchen stove and a massive, coal-burning, ising-glass-fronted, "pot belly" in the dining room. Such heat as made its was to the living room was incidental.

The set itself? Very darkish wood, about 3 1/2 feet high, perhaps 20 inches wide, and a foot deep. It stood on turned legs that were about 12-14 inches high...an important dimension, for they allowed the juvenile listener (me) to life on my back on the cold floor with my head and shoulders under the set. I could gaze up into the darkness at a few mysterious red glows (the vacuum tubes) and turn my imagination loose.

And, on what did the 9-year-old-and-older imagination batten? Why, to be sure, "Little Orphan Annie" (She just HAD to be a boy under that fright wig, considering the adventures she got into!), "Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy", "The Lone Ranger", "Sky King", and later on, "Sgt. Preston of the Mounties". Later in the evenings, others of the family might listen to less exciting fare, but I always felt that I had gotten the best out the set daily, and anyone else who listened later was getting left-overs and pale stuff.

The 30's waxed into the 40's; the Silver Marshall came to 7th Street with us, and it was in action as late as '47 and '48. Now there was competition from table models, much cheaper and far more sensitive (for in the 30's we had WOWO, WLW in Cincinnati, WJR in Detroit and not a lot else (unless, like a cousin in South Bend, you went short-wave *and HE picked up the Piccard broadcast from South Dakota as they set the world record for height in a balloon ascension!* The rest of us considered it freakish good luck if we could get Pittsburgh!)

We rarely ever threw anything away, so I think Mother must have given the Silver Marshall to a step-grandson who was into radio. From there, it was involved in one of his many disastrous trades. If it exists anywhere now, nearly 50 years later, it's likely as an embarrassed liquor cabinet (After all, remember Jack Armstrong's association with that cabinet!) Sic transit glorious Silver Marshall!

I no longer lie on the floor to listen to the radio. In fact, I no longer listen to commercial radio at all. But, once in a while when a bit of static leaks out as I am push-buttoning across my FM receiver (listening for PBS), for a moment I remember again, "With a hearty "Hi yo, Silver...."

Among My Souvenirs

In a thousand dusty, undisturbed places lie little autograph albums, nostalgic, sentimental reminders of a kinder and gentler age. Memories, so lovingly entrapped in those little books, call back to us a sentimentality that would improve our age of plastic and aspirin. They were a popular item among school children, and considerable thought went into your words and considerable effort went into your handwriting, for as one may see, some of the words long outlasted their authors.

My book had been owned by one George Milner, born west of Ligonier, Indiana, in 1872. He, his sisters Olive and Eva, and the Kinnison sisters attended nearby country schools and finished their education at a Ligonier Academy. The writings were of 1882-85, and in a quality of handwriting that beggars any that you would find among today's children.

(It was an age that prided itself in its literacy, in its fluency of expression, and in its beauty of handwriting. A good friend of former years once told me of her family gathering around the circular oak dining table in the evening to practice their "fine hands" and regarding it as recreation!)

What went into the small album?

"When you get old and cannot see,
Put on you specs and think of me
Mae Kinnison, January 1885

Sometime a bit of humor?

"Forget thee, NO! I'd as soon
Forget the dinner bell at noon,
And leave the turnips, meat, and 'taters
To be devourved by hungry waiters!"
Ruth Kinnison 1883

Sometimes a melancholy thought?

"May wreaths of friendship
Encircle thy cot,
When your friend, Eva
Is dead and forget."
Eva Milner December, 1882

Sad footnote: Eva was dead within a year or so after writing this message.

Uncle George Milner grew up, graduated with impressive ceremony (in the same class as Sister Olive), taught school himself, went off to the Spanish-American War in '98, married his beloved "Billie" about 15 years later, worked as a cabinet-maker for Singer Sewing machines of South Bend, was financially ravaged by the bank collapse of the 30's, retired of ill health in the mid-40's and died in '49. In all of this while, he kept his small album.

Upon his death, Aunt Winnifred treasured the album until she passed way in '62. My mother then passed the book on to me, and I have since placed it in the hands of a family member sensitive/sentimental enough to value it as I did. For, like some beloved tintypes of family back in the 1870 era, they have the power to remind us of a kinder, gentler age.

But, the "Practical Pig" in my nature causes me to wonder yet: Where would children, living on a farm outside Ligonier, get a concept of "hungry waiters"?, and: Were turnips considered a delicacy then, or was the poet just maintaining the scansion?

"And leave the parsnips
carrots
spinach.."

Why Don't Things Taste That Good Anymore?

I read devotedly, each Wednesday morning, the pronouncements of Sandy Thorn Clark, food critic extraordinaire, of the Ft. Wayne Journal-Gazette; and I watch, sometimes twice a day, the "Great Chefs" programs on the Discovery Channel on TV. These acts cause me to now make two points to the reader: that I am NOT, I repeat, **NOT** a gourmet! (A lady once cut me from her list of luke-warm friends because I would not serve as a food critic of similar assignment an a fledgling Ft. Wayne magazine, not recognizing that I talk a much meaner menu than I ever eat!) In truth, I'm interested in the process, and the FLAMING EXCESSES of the so-called great chefs; but it does not mean that I could emulate them, nor am I competent to judge their efforts.

And the second point: that nothing they cook looks half as delicious as legend tells us the foods of the past were. But...were they? I think so.

Everyone's mother was, of course, a great cook. To a hungry child...to a ravening teenager...anyone is a great cook, yes? Benjamin Franklin had it right when he said, "Hunger is the best pickle (appetizer)". Ordinary foods, eaten with great appetite and in the presence of congenial companions (Families sometimes qualify, if there are not too many sisters!) become gourmet treats. And consider the last point seriously; if you can recall the finest meals of your life, weren't they some sort of celebratory occasion with someone you loved.

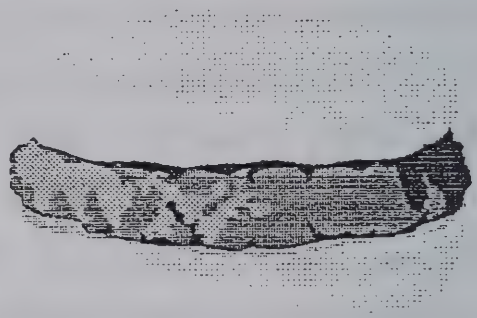
Oh, indeed, I can agree that ingredients in the old days were superior: the range-run chickens with the golden skin; "un-tin-ned" freshly grated nutmeg; vegetables FRESH from your own garden (and picked dead ripe); lard-based pie crusts; triple-sifted cake flours lovingly enfolded in strictly "from scratch" recipes; and time, TIME, **TIME** in a perfumed kitchen--all lent to a superior result.

I eat many meals alone now; the food doesn't entice me. I eat many "boxed", "store bought", "prepared" meals now, and they just don't taste like Mother's cooking.

I have virtually given up reading the pronouncements of the health authorities, who seem to tell me that everything I eat or like is bad for me. Too much reading of the "experts" (who in most cases can be counted on to hold diametrically opposite views in a further 10 years, anyhow!) is, in my unhumble opinion, worse for me.

And, sometimes, I watch the great chefs, thinking that if I cannot peel/pare away, grate away, boil away, or SAUTÉ away 90% of whatever I'm cooking, the rest can't be worth marooning on a large plate in a sea of strange sauce and thinking that the millennium, gustatorily speaking, has arrived.

But then, I return comfortable to the lasting image of the finest meal of my adolescence...and it wasn't my mother's, either. I bowled on the Auburn Diner Bowling team. Herman Tritch, owner of the Diner, pretended to understand the great advertising value his juvenile team had. So, whenever we won only one game in anevening--no reward. Two games, 10 cents in trade. Three games, 15 cents. And 15 cents would buy one of Herman's hamburgers..."Nature's most-nearly-perfect-food," and a bottle of pop. Herman would toast the bun on the grill, cook the hamburger perfectly (without benefit of McDonald's Instruction School), top it with a single perfect slice of onion, and allow us the use of the house's home-made horseradish mustard! The gods did not eat any better than that! (In Mother's restaurant hamburgers were pan fried, and simply could not compete with Herman's grill.) Of course, Herman's hamburger was eaten with Goldie and Jason and other team members...no small part of the mystique of the occasion.



(Herman, Jason, and Goldie have all gone to meet their Maker. It's worth my trudging onward just to keep the memory of those hamburgers alive.)

And yes, I do remember some...many....a myriad of good things from my mother's kitchen and restaurant and I am not alone there. One gentleman came in afternoons at four for warm apple pie and milk, knowing that Mother would have put the pies in the oven just before leaving for home and her afternoon nap. The kindly hardware owners from next door, for years after Mother gave up the restaurant, were abundant in their gratitude whenever Mother fashioned a sugar cream pie for them. The telegraph operator came on Saturday night about every 5 or 6 weeks for fried chicken livers. The Sunday dinner crowds ate her superb baking powder biscuits for 9 wonderful years, as well as the host of home-made.....TRULY HOME-MADE...pies...the butterscotch, the pumpkin, and the fabulous mincemeat. And, I came to know that there is no finer craftsman than a good home cook.

In One Century, And Out The Other?

The imminence of one of those big dates in my life (#70) causes at least two reactions on my part, one that can be commented on briefly, and the other is the subject of most of this....this....whatever. Briefly? It causes me to hope that there is no fatal exactness about the Biblical promise of "Three score and ten years" being the allotted span of man.

And, to somewhat more length, it causes me to review some of what I have seen in those 70 years of the 19th and 20th centuries. Born in 1924, you'd wonder how I was connected with the 19th Century?

Easy answer: I, and all of my age group, were raised by Victorians, parents who were of the 19th Century. When my parents raised me, as with most parents, they raised me very much as they had been raised. (Oh yes, there were some subtle changes, more education, Mother working outside the home, but their attitudes were strongly family centered, law-abiding, trusting of authority....safe, comfortable, and relatively satisfied with the status quo.)

I cannot recall when it was that I became conscious of any conflict between the world in which I lived and my parents' values. Certainly, not before we moved to 333 W. 11th in 1933. There, we still lived with the "technology" of the previous century. We heated with coal-burning cookstove and a glorious large pot-belly type stove in the dining room (and a three-burner kerosene stove in the kitchen in summer.) The kitchen stove had a reservoir for warm water; we had a rain-water cistern to supply the soft water for that reservoir. Saturday night baths were in a large, galvanized tub in the kitchen, and you shared the water serially. The house had a shingle roof, and you repaired it yourself...for a temporary reduction in the $12-per-month rent.

I don't think that we had a washing machine, yet. (Mother would be slow to return to this, for abundant reason. In the summer of 1924, very pregnant, she revolted against washing clothes in the washboard-boiling the whites-galvanized tub method. "If Father wanted clean clothes, he could get her a machine!" Father belittled (a near fatal reaction!) her characterization of the difficulties and undertook the washing the next Monday himself. It took only that one hot day to win him over.

Being the mechanical genius that all American males are, he did not spring for a washer with the attached gasoline motor. No, no. He bought his washer (motorless); installed it on the back porch; and ran a long belt from the gasoline engine that served the well in the year. Early Rube Goldberg? Yep! Mother criticized his "economy", and fired up her "I-told-you-so" glance.

Father loaded the washer, fired up the gasoline-cum-belt arrangement, and watched with dismay as the washer was shipped off the porch and across the yard by the misaligned arrangement. Father had driven both horses and mules. I am sure that his commentary was adequate to the provocation.

For that, and perhaps economic reasons also, I have no memory of us owning a washer until the aluminum-tubbed Maytags became common. This sturdy, utilitarian machine remained in good use in our home well into the 1950's, and the last one we owned was sold to a grateful friend after 1960. It may be running yet!

Well into the 1930's, then, we washed clothes a la 19th Century.

Looking about the town in the 30's, there was plenty of 19th Century hangover. Many streets were yet dirt. In a few places on the edges of town, people still had chicken runs. There were horse hitching racks on the east side of the Court Square and on Union Street, near the old Nichols Stables (now Holben's Auto Repair). Lots of gardens were yet "hand-spaded". A very few huckster wagons prowled the streets, but they were losing ground to a host of "Mom-and-Pop" groceries.

Personally, I spaded that monstrous garden (which seemed to stretch on to Nebraska sometimes). I carried in 5 gallon buckets of coal, morning and/or night...much to the amusement of peers on the old Harrison School grounds. (I hadn't a very good aim, but a few snowballs with a lump of coal at their center eventually secured a degree of respect from them!) I carried out the buckets of ashes for city trash pick up.

I marveled at the fur buying business our next door neighbor ran---particularly when someone would bring him a live possum and he would dispatch it by whipping its skull into a utility pole. Mother thought very little of this practice and even less when the buyer's mother tried to feed me cooked possum once!

Where did the Victorian age finally seem to be overwhelmed? World War II, I'd guess. After that time, EVERYONE had to have a car. After that time, the woman working out of the home was not the exception. Soon, Dr. Spook arrived to tell us how to ruin our children, scientifically. Paris and Mary Quant stated an onslaught of women's taste that could not be ignored and cannot be forgotten. Literature took "Amber" to be the specimen heroine of the future; poetry became spastic. Theater became "Hair-y". Melody died a dishonorable death at the hands of modern composers. (Doom would thereafter be sounded, not be Joshua's trumpets, but by an amplified guitar.) If you could understand a painting, you couldn't sell it. If you could enjoy a dish, it simply wasn't good for you.

A lot that was leisurely, gracious, gentle, kind, generous...a lot of good things either disappeared or were devalued. I personally miss melody, and holding doors open for ladies., good pictorial magazines, range-run chickens, ice-cream sodas, and ethnic jokes...and lotsa other things. I have to wonder how long into the 21st Century we will pass before someone finds our century worthy of nostalgia. I wobble at the thought that someone, someday may wax wistful over rap music, or may find our bungee-cord hemlines romantic. And, given the "advances" we've suffered in our lives, what in the world will they have left to be shocked about?

Where Do The Trains Go Now?

It is one of those nights when sleep does not "lay its leaden mace" on me--perhaps the legacy of an evening with Juan Valdez and his caffeine-toting burro--or perhaps too much stimulating event and companionship--but sleep I do not. In the dark of my bedchamber and from a great distance, I hear a memory of days past--a lonely train whistle in the night' and I wonder, "Where do the trains go now?"

When I was a child, and on very rare nights when I did not the sleep of the innocent young, I would hear train whistles in the night. A celebrated author captured all of my reaction when she noted that she never heard a train whistle but that she would gladly go wherever it was going. I never quite located the "where" that they were going, but I'd have gone too. Oh, I had played along the cinder-strewn tracks and knew such fragments of local geography as would give me Hicksville in one direction and Garrett in the other, but beyond that---mystery! I could have known that eventually the tracks ran to Chicago and Omaha and San Francisco...or Bangor or Boston or Biloxi. I could have, indeed but all I cared or dared then to know was that the line ran from the curve toward Garrett to the floating climb toward St. Joe., And so, I lay abed heard the mournful whistle and the faint-but-hypnotic clack of rails, and let the steam dragons disappear into romance and mystery and ignorance.

Now at 70, I hear lonely whistles again and feel a longing; but is it to be that child again, or is it to know where the trains in the night go?

The Future(?) Revisited

With the original *Reflections*, it was a questionable act that caused me to list potential subjects. I didn't have a very strong urge to write another set of articles. But, kind words brought me back to the word processor, and here we are. Where next? Well...in addition to the subjects listed in *Auburn Reflections* (40 remain), here are another 18 that are "fetched" from that bygone era.

1. Legends of the Auburn Hotel
2. Fruit Cellars and Cisterns
3. Mom & Pop Groceries
4. Penny Candies and Penny Pencils
5. Pumpkin and Tomato Ice Cream
6. The Tankage Company
7. Robbins Field and Auburn's Big Leaguers
8. No Less Than the Deacon--the Thread of Talent in the Scott Family
9. Erna Slagg Goes to the '93 Colombian Exposition
10. Stinky Davis and the Facts of Life
11. Prohibition Legends--Auburn and the Volstead Act
12. Ken Shulle and the Jock Teacher
13. Robert Quance and the Unkindest Cuts of Them All
14. Misinformation: Learning the Facts of Life in the '30's
15. On Being a Thoroughly Rotten Caddie
16. Ejected Forever!--the 15 cent Ham Sandwich Controversy
17. Walter, Claude, and the Ecclesiastical Clinker
18. Norm and the Rednecks
19. Honeybun's Cold, Cold Elopement, 1912
20. Auburn's Athletes for the Ages--Don Lash & Dave Williams
21. Songs Sung in Praise of the Foods of My Childhood.

REFLECTIONS IN A SERVING SPOON

A "COOKBOOK"

BARRY A. BARTELS
HUBERT L. STACKHOUSE

REFLECTIONS CAFE

Bill of Fare

Foreward i

Editor's Note ii

Acknowledgements iii

Appetizers

What Makes the Good Cook 1

Move Over, Escoffier...or Great Cooks I Have Known 3

A Little Witchcraft in the Kitchen 5

Father in the Kitchen 7

On The Pleasures Of Doing Dishes (?) 9

Main Course

Dangerous Permutations 11

Amish Sugar Cookies 14

West 7th Street Sukiyaki 15

A Party Every Night! 19

Why Don't Things Taste That Good Anymore? 22

Maude Gatten's Meatloaf 24

Side Orders

The Lady Makes A Salad 25

A Pair of Winners From Mother Walters 26

A Pair of Salads 29

The Delectable Frozen Fruit Dessert 31

Martha's Magic 33

Rose Buttermore's Pecan Brittle 35

Quince Honey 37

Ambrosia Revisited - Quince Honey 39

For The Hearty Appetite

Frumenty, That Is! (or Frumity, Fermenty, and Fermity) 41

Of Herculean Proportion 43

Soup's On!!! 45

Ambiance You Can Eat 48

REFLECTIONS CAFE

Bill of Fare (cont.)

Desserts

Doughnuts in Rhyme 52
Spice Cake "The Best" 53
Peach Cake 55
The Banana Cake 56
Hickory Nut Cake 57
Hickory Nut Cake - Revisited 59
Gertrude's Favorite Cake 61
A Missing Recipe 62
Mother Makes Mincemeat 64
20-Quart Mincemeat 66
Lately-Discovered Jewels 67
The Sugar Cream Pie 70
Pie Secrets (cont.) 73
Prelude to a Stunning Cheesecake 75
The World's Best Cheesecake 76

Diet Plate

Do or Die(t)! 77
Pasta Shells Florentine 82

Foreword

First of all, I thought my compositor said “foreplay”, and I was a lot more interested in THAT than THIS. But, if convention requires that I do something “fore”, …Ah, Well!

Why a cookbook? Why not? At 400 pounds (my fighting weight when this opus was launched), I looked like I had at least an acquaintance with food. But, as the child of an eminently successful cook, I may have some useful information to pass on. Admiring my mother’s proficiency, I could not help but be interested in other good cooks who could emulate…and in several cases, exceed…my mother’s success at the range.

And…and…I can claim some small success in the kitchen myself. Simply put: “I have been around cooks and good cooking most of my life; I enjoy the kitchen (but not the dirty pans); I could have made a decent living and been happy as a cook. And, I could learn to imbibe like Julia Child, if I had to do so to qualify as a cookbook guru.

So, when my cohort, the nefarious Barry Bartels of Bartels Fabulous Cheesecakes (only slightly more expensive than the Star of Africa) asked little old me to turn my word-processor to a cookbook…Well, Hey, he didn’t have to ask me twice!

So, here follow about 25 recipes of my acquaintance, culled from Mother’s cookbooks, Aunt Winnifred, Cousin Freida, Sister-in-Law Bodey, Pat Walters Leffler, “Mother” Walters (Pat’s aunt), niece Mary Ann Houser, and anyone else who didn’t guard their recipes well enough.

Added to it are the recipes collected by cohort, Barry Bartels of Florence, KY, his wife, Jenny Parish Bartels, his Mother-in-Law Ernestine G. Parish, her niece Rina Parish of Fort Wayne, and others.

It is my hope that you can eat the recipes and endure the blather that so oddly seems to please my readers.

Hubert L. Stackhouse
(West 7th Street Escoffier)
September 1995

Editor's Note

The American Heritage Dictionary gives the definition of gourmet as:

> ***gour·met*** *(go͝or-mā′, go͝or′mā′) noun A connoisseur of fine food and drink.*[1]

By this definition I think that many of us would qualify as gourmets. But the dictionary does not give a definition of the term *gourmet chef*, but people use the term all the time. My definition of a gourmet chef would be an exceptional cook who has great sense of style and not a little bit of attitude.

What you now have in your hands would not be considered by most to be a gourmet cookbook but I tend to disagree. While most of the recipes in this book probably would not be served in the "Finest Restaurants", you can't deny that they have a certain sense of style.

So enjoy the book; try some of the recipes; who knows what horizons may open before you. Bon Apetit.

Acknowledgments

Cookbooks don't just happen, even considering the egos of confirmed or fancied good cooks. Following the shallow-water triumph of H. Stackhouse ("On Further Reflections", Waander's Bookmark, $\$9^{00}$, copies mawkishly engrossed by author), B. Bartels of Ft. Wayne / Florence, KY, suggested that H. Stackhouse draw of his many and varied experiences in the food game, on his contacts with celebrated family cooks, and off the resulting culinary jewel for the Holiday trade of 1995.

Not having ever "done" a cookbook, we were not hindered by any conventions of publishing. One would supply the cheerful chatter that has been modestly successful in the past, along with recipes from his esteemed mother and a host of cooking friends. The other would supply recipes, of course, and invaluable expertise on the computer. Together, they would launch themselves toward a higher income bracket!(Fantasy!)

So, Mother S, friends, and perhaps even kind strangers were recruited to fluff out the work. Here, then follows a list of these kindly souls:

The Amish, borrowed through Ernestine Parish
The Clayton Baker Family, obtained through Robert Wilder
Barry Bartels, of Ft. Wayne, Florence, KY and parts known
Jenny Bartels, the light of his life and a very good cook in her on right
Rose Buttermore
The Calumet 1912 cookbook, and Gertrude(?)
Cousin Freida Dailey
Coleen DeCamp, *the Mother,* of Aurora, IN ...and
Rick DeCamp, *the son,* of Rising Sun, IN
Maude Gatten, of the 1912 St. Joe Hotel
Niece Mary Ann Houser
Aunt Winnifred Milner
The Old Testament
Ernestine Parish, of Auburn, Ft. Wayne, Florence, KY
Rina Parish, a Ft. Wayne niece
Bertha (Bodey) Stackhouse, daughter-in-law of...
Hazel L. Stackhouse, the primary source
Mrs. Betty Gushwa of Ft. Wayne, and trusted friend Beverly Snyder

Hubert L. Stackhouse, the son
Mrs. Melvin Walters, via Pat Leffler,a niece, and Ruth Walters, a daughter-in-law
Vivian Watts, retired educator
Berneice Wible, via Martha Falka & Dr. Paul Trausch

…and the manifold kindness' of Judy Waanders of Waanders' Bookmark, who thrusts these varied works toward commercial solvency.

To all of the foregoing, a sincere, high calorie "Thank You"

APPETIZERS

What Makes the Good Cook?

Probably better than any single recipe that we could offer would be the basic knowledge…some underlying secret of all good cooking…if such exists. To determine that, we have conducted an unofficial survey of a number of good cooks of our acquaintance, asking them a series of questions:

1. Is there some single attribute that good cooks have in your opinion?
2. Is there some single, underlying principle of good cooking?
3. Who (modestly exclude yourself) is the best cook you have ever met?
4. What would you consider the cardinal sin of bad cooking?

Here are my own responses:

1. For however they learned it, good cooks know the function of their ingredients. They may know, for example, a half a dozen ways to cause pastry to rise, and understand why buttermilk and soda may be better in a given recipe than baking powder, or folded-in egg whites.
2. Every good cook knows the IMPERATIVE of fine ingredients. If the recipe calls for butter, margarine is NOT an acceptable substitute. Spare yourself the embarrassment of a co-worker of my sister-in-law, who complained that the cookies didn't taste right, and then admitted to making a half-dozen "cost-cutting" substitutions in the ingredients.

3. All Round Cook - my mother, naturally. But…she wasn't anything special on salads, or the grill. She was a superb farm-style cook, a dazzling pie-baker, and a good learner. She was a fine organizer and a great expediter. She could have managed a great European hotel kitchen with the best of them. Self-preservation keeps me from nominating any others, but I have known lots of excellent cooks, and verified my choices by putting my feet under their tables.
4. Cardinal sins? Getting too cute for the occasion. Making a dish so elaborate that, like the Texan in "Saratoga Trunk", you're tempted to ask for the ketchup just to put the chef in his place! Simplicity is an overlooked virtue in cooking. If your recipes are works of art, give them to the Metropolitan! There is after all, a special place in Heaven for those who can prepare a perfect hamburger, while a number of "great chefs" ought to be cooking over the fires of Hell for such dishes as the late Al Capp's "Roast Rump of Tree Dwelling Elephant with Ecstasy Sauce".

Move Over, Escoffier...or *Great Cooks I Have Known*

(Reprinted from ...On Further Reflection)

People gaze on my figure abundant, listen to my chatter about foods, and frequently reach a nice, logical, wrong conclusion: that I am a gourmet. Not so, me. I am truly the size that I am ("pleasingly plump", or with "fully-proportioned figure"...or even "stylishly stout"), not because of good food that I have consumed, but rather too much indifferent or downright bad food that I ate in moments of frustration or boredom. It's not that I don't know what good food is, and what a gourmet cook can do, but I'm not their willing victim to the extent that charitable friends would think.

But, of recent years, I have become an avid watcher of the TV cooking demonstration shows--the Romanolas on Italian cooking, the Frugal Gourmet (who must preach with a fry-pan in his pulpit and would do better to abandon the latter in favor of the former), Great Chefs of East/West/Southwest/Chicago/San Francisco, and even the Great Chefs of the World. Julia Child? One of the great comediennes of the world, especially after she has been to the cooking sherry and champagne too often!

But, has there been no one in my own life that was worthy of a few Michelin stars? Indeed, I think there has been:

Maude Gatten, of the St. Joe Hotel, circa 1912--who taught my mother the one truly delectable meatloaf recipe I know.

Herman Tritch, of the Auburn Diner, who took the humble hamburger and raised it to ambrosial heights--and gave his bowling team one if they won two games of an evening!

My Grandmother Harriet Onstott Bills, mistress of the flour bowl. All common baked goods were made in an unmeasured arena of flour in a large wooden bowl. Strictly "by-touch" cooking, and *witchcrafty* to watch. I never knew the lady, but would a boy's mother lie to him? Mama said she was extraordinary.

A Sister, a Sister-in-law, and a Cousin; who apologized profusely about their baking and turn out peach pies that Julia Child could only dream about.

A revered Aunt, whose ice-box cookies and crispy butterscotch cookies remain an indelible memory more than thirty years after her demise, as does her hickory nut cake (with NO

DIRECTIONS ever recorded for her amount of flour, her oven time, or her oven temperature). "A good cook would just know, now wouldn't they?"

A mere slip of a girl from Florence, KY, who can extemporize championship results for almost anything. Just sit her before a restaurant spice cabinet and watch her repair the profaned potato salad dressing; or spin up a gourmet cheese ball strictly by instinct; or prepare volcanic jalapeno pepper sauces; or turn out a peach cobbler to die for.

And her mother, whose ability to adapt recipes to her own taste--with spectacular improvement--is unmatched.

And my own mother. I'm prejudiced, of course. But she made 115,000 pies in her career as a restaurant cook. She could have made those remarkable crusts blindfolded, literally. Her mincemeat was legendary; her pumpkin pies prodigious; her butterscotch and banana or pineapple creams a pure delight on the tongue. Secrets? Don't work pie crust beyond an absolute minimum; a two crust fruit pie must stew (and bubble out, often into the oven) to be done; home made bread must bake a full hour; the toughest chicken can be gotten done quite nicely by putting clean, large spike nails between the pieces; and the best fresh fruit pies (peach, strawberry) can be done the simplest--baked crust, sugared fruit, and whipped cream, period.

Are there gourmet cooks yet to be found? Sure...try the pie bakers at Bob's in Woodburn; the whole steer hamburgers at the St. Joe Lions at the Fair; steaks at Shopoff's, on US 24 south of Ft Wayne...or at Sam's in Blakeslee.

And a parting word for my hero-chefs on TV, "You can't make my great cooks list until you forget the caviar, the mousses, the pates, the champagne sauces. Any meal that is going to cost $50 a person is show biz, not down home cookin'".

A Little Witchcraft in the Kitchen

(Reprinted from ...On Further Reflection)

Let darkest Africa have its witchcraft; let the tropics have their voodoo priestesses working their old smoky magic. For sheer mystery, give me the old-time "pinch 'n dab" cook anytime. And, the results were edible!

One of my grandmothers was a pinch 'n dab artist (sadly, the other could scarcely boil water). My mother vividly recounted the mystery and the achievement of that common (for the 1880's) method of cooking.

First, "What in the world do you need measurements for?" seemed to be their watchwords. Grandmother Bills began with a large flour bowl, holding perhaps 5 pounds. I suppose the only occasion when this wasn't the foundation was for a fine cake whose flour must be double sifted (and because the batter was fairly liquid) and contained in a mixing bowl. But pie crust, biscuits, noodles, dumplings, rivels...just the flour bowl. There was, of course, an even more hair-raising foundation, in which a mound of flour was piled on a breadboard and things began from this unbounded heap. Modern European chefs can yet be seen on TV gourmet shows using this method...but the cowards usually measure out the basic amount of flour they will need.

Well, now...she would make a depression in the flour, and into that put her moist ingredients. Pie crust? Probably lard first, worked to large crumbs and then united with a minimum of water and hand mixing. Such mixtures were best kept cool, and hand temperatures DID affect them if you "wooled" them about. When the dough was united, it could be lifted out on a rolling board for final forming...or balled and refrigerated (ice-boxed, that is) for future use.

No cook was going to ruin her handiwork by working too much flour into her dough while rolling things out. You could have easily converted melt-in-the-mouth cookies to hockey pucks by such a mistake, as indeed did the mother of a friend of mine. Here, indeed, was a large part of the true artistry. That cook understood...she just came to know, the textures of her recipes. She could probably have identified, blindfolded, what the final product was to be by a single touch on the dough. My own mother's superb touch with pie dough was first a matter of feel and then confirmation by sight that the crumbs of flour and shortening were just the right size to invite the water.

Secondly, the cook understood the function of each ingredient. She knew HOW sour milk and soda did their leavening together; how yeast and sugar teamed up in bread; what the various shortenings, animal or vegetable, would do to texture. She could handle baking ammonia, poisonous in itself, to produce lemon snap cookies that are now a lost art.

Thirdly, she was an athlete of the kitchen. Baking ten or more pies of a Saturday morning took stamina. Mixing, kneading, and forming 10-15-20 loaves of bread left a girl with shoulders that Nordic Track-letes might well envy. And, not rarely did she split her own wood to heat the ovens; not rarely did she do her own wash-up without aid of Kitchen Aide. And this much effort attended simply everyday life. When the threshers came, it doubled, and perhaps re-doubled.

"Still, wasn't there more 'magic' than just that?" Yep! Consider Aunt Winnifred's celebrated recipe for hickory nut cake. "Recipe?" Yes, to a point. She must have gotten in the hands of some domestic revisionist and been forced to speak in teaspoons and cups, but only so far. This vaunted cake recipe did not offer such trivialities as oven temperatures, baking time, OR FLOUR. Nor, for that matter, did my mother's celebrated Lady Baltimore cake, the pride of her family. You just knew that you added flour until "it worked well", or "it was silky" or the dough ball "thumped just ever so".

And when was it done? Why, when a BROOMSTRAW (clean!) could be inserted and come out clean.

FATHER IN THE KITCHEN

My father pretty well understood that the kitchen was woman's province. Man, the fields; man, the garden; and especially, **man, the garage.** When Father did get into the kitchen, it was usually because Mother was on one of her cooking jobs. (True, I had sisters who could have "spelled" Mother, but they cooked for us . . . no more often than total eclipses!) {And hey-oh! I can darn with the best of them . . . if a bit flamboyantly with the red wool yarn. My buttons are things of beauty and eternal security!}

But, Father and the kitchen. Three memories:

1. Boiled wheat for breakfast. It didn't make it! I know now that there is a method of making boiled wheat palatable--the so-called "frumenty" of the Bible (and a 3,000 year old recipe, that!) Father just boiled it and set it before us. I had long since learned the virtue of pitching in and eating anything and everything while my siblings engaged in pointless jurisdictional battles at the table, but the wheat . . . NOT!

2. Fried dandelion blossoms. THESE MADE IT! They are a loving memory of life on Phillip Street, 1932. Father gathered perhaps a half-gallon of "glorious yellow" (I am as much a dandelion fan as Opus in *Bloom County*!). He washed and cleaned them rather carefully, cutting away any trace of a stem under the blossom, for therein lay the bitter "milk" *(note: If your Dandelion Wine has a nasty tang, "stem milk" is likely the reason.)*. He then dredged them in flour, ands fried them in butter (*I think).* My memory, over the ensuing 60 years, is that they tasted like fried mushrooms. Of course, there is a voice of cynical asperity somewhere about that will claim that you could fry a coconut fiber doormat in butter

and it would be tasty! But they were good, they were! We also ate dandelion greens, but they were a product of Mother's cooking, after BEING VERY CAREFULLY CLEANED. (Cooked with vinegar, sugar, & bacon chips - Great!)

3. Father and the chickens . . . a gritty episode. If you wanted chicken, you bought it live and butchered and dressed it yourself. Oh sure, some farm ladies would bring cleaned and dressed birds to town on Saturdays, but **to pay someone 25¢ for cleaning a chicken? NOT!** Soooo, on the occasion in point, Father was in the kitchen, getting ready to draw the birds *(Note: That's de-gut them, for you city slickers!)* He had dipped the decapitated dominickers *(poetic flourish)* in boiling water, pulled off all of the feathers AND the skin off the feet, singed them over a burning newspaper, and was now washing and scraping the bird. If it had been a darker feathered bird, like a Plymouth Rock, he'd have been looking carefully for the pinfeathers. So too, any bird slaughtered near molting time, when they became a mass of pinfeathers.

   That done, he noted how greasy the old hens were. The heat of the boiling water and the manipulation of the cleaning process would have caused the skin oils to flow abundantly. What to do? Mother would simply have continued to wash with cold water until the situation abated. Father, ever resourceful, remembered a longtime friend of his days as a mechanic, and reached for the bar of Lava Soap®. After a fashion, it worked. The chickens were clean, THEY WERE! The drawing and disjointing were accomplished. I cannot recall whether Mother came upon the desecration, or Father simply bragged of it to her . . . or she had to wait until she bit into a piece of the gritty chicken. But, the fine pumice of the soap would have taken up residence in every feather follicle . . . and some of the soapy flavor too!

   Now, you must understand, that this was the girl who had once punted a checkerboard from between his knees when she caught him cheating *(at checkers)* early in their marriage! She COULD, and DID, make his culinary sin known. If . . . IF he ever cleaned another chicken, you may be sure that Lava did not figure in the equation any longer.

   So . . . Father generally left the kitchen to Mother (a bit of wisdom that escaped an ancient brother-in law of mine). And, Mother never attempted to repair the family car. To each his own arena.

Farewell Random Thought: There's a little bit of Tim Allen of *Tool Time* in a lot of homes, Father and the Lava Soap®, Father and the washing machine episode (one of the late reflections in "On Further Reflection"). I can remember also Louise Dickinson Rich's husband, delivering one of their children in a lonely Maine cabin, telling his wife that he learned how to oil a newborn baby by lubricating a piston when he was rebuilding an engine!

On The Pleasures Of Doing Dishes (?)

As a child, the prospect of having to do dishes (usually reserved to the girls in the family) was only exceeded in horror by having to carry out ashes **while being observed** by my peers on the school ground that bordered on my Eleventh Street home. I weathered the latter; I should surely have perished had I been caught drying dishes in a dishtowel apron. It may be said that the former had some possibility of equalization: toss a snowball, enclosing a lump of coal, at them; and they gave you some modicum of respect. But, there was no salvation for the apron bit...**none**!

Then, I entered the Army, and once for 60 days straight, I was on permanent KP, doing the dishes (silverware) for 2500 men per meal, three meals a day. That equals approximately one million, three hundred fifty thousand (1,350,000) individual pieces of "silver". Eventually, I shed the permanent KP status (to become a clerk-typist), but I never forgot the silverware. As lorn and horny as a bachelor (me) could be, still even Helen of Troy couldn't have lured me to a dishtank.

I have grown older; forget the "L & H" designation; I now do dishes. Why the great change?:

1. I am still a bachelor. On those infrequent occasions when some well-meaning person "bellies-up" to the dishtank, I can count on days or weeks of confusion as I try to find out what they did with my favorite utensils. I am favored with a young man who cheerfully does those things about my home that I can no longer manage; but if he is ever found to be the victim of foul play **and** it occurs after he again misplaces my favorite butcher knife, I must then be counted as a prime suspect! Spare me from those who would rearrange my life, including my dishes.

2. Even if the above aforementioned helpers could get things back where they

belonged, what creditable cook would let them touch his cast-iron cookware! They might be permitted to restore some sheen to the copper bottomed pans, yes. But cast-iron, properly seasoned? Never! **Never!!** **Never!!!** That crust of carbon and fat/cooking oil/grease is **sacred!** I tell you! Give them a vegetable brush and send them off to clean their Grandfather's pipes instead.

3. If you let them anywhere into your domestic arrangements, they are going to notice things you'd rather they didn't. So Betty Crocker would blanch with horror at your housekeeping? If it's yours, and you're comfortable...what the hey!

4. I don't like dirty fingernails or the garden dirt that becomes ingrained in the rougher parts of my hands. One good round with the Ivory Snow® (which I'd like you to believe I always use) or some cheaper detergent (which I actually **do** use), and I'm ready for the Queen's Tea, yeah!

5. And...there is an in definable feeling that comes over one when you compare the neatened sink area with what went before. The satisfaction of a solitary? Whatever.

But....I do not, repeat **NOT**, wear the apron! (Except when eating cornbread with hot syrup, which drips ever so!)

MAIN COURSE

Dangerous Permutations

There are obviously a lot of people who are good cooks, and everything they touch turns to "cuisine". Perhaps it's the generally good results (albeit sometimes assisted by box mixes and Ms. Crocker) that have made some of these failures amusing to me. To wit:

Of my accomplished mother, none that I can recall.

Of my father (who really didn't have much responsibility in the kitchen), only the time that he sought to remedy the greasiness of a couple of stewing hens by washing them in Lava® Soap. Mother's reaction was emphatic.

Of my own? Well, once I conceived a sure delicacy to be known as "Hubert's Bologna Surprise". It was a round of German bologna surmounted by a piece of sharp American cheddar and fused together under a broiler. It very nearly surprised Mother into the hospital...one "lulu" of a digestive upset she got from it.

And, while I cannot remember the propellant used, I once managed to get a pot of corn meal mush / oatmeal (memory you know), on the ceiling of the kitchen at 11th Street. Werner von Braun would have been proud.

But the best tales of this ilk that I know are of friends or acquaintances. Should they recognize their "achievements" in these lines...Who's going to know but you and me?

The Lady and the Cookies She had been forced by circumstance to go to work at the age of 15 (telephone operator). She missed those hours at mother's side when domestic skills would have been polished. She married at 35, and early on had to serve her husband the results of "pinch and dab" recipes given to her.

Cookies it was. The recipe said "add flour until they work well". Sticky at first, flour was added. Turned from the bowl onto the rolling/cutting board, more flour was added. They worked better, they did; more flour was added. This "adding" apparently went on longer than I have space to tell. As the dear lady was telling me of the experience, many years later, her loving husband interjected, "And, yes sir, Stacky , I soaked the damned things in boiling coffee for ten minutes, and it never fazed them!" I guess you could make hockey pucks that way.

Using Your Noodle(s)? Among Mother's other honors was that of supervising the meal service for her Church's religious assemblies…a service providing more than 3,000 meals a weekend. Mother planned the menus (with the chauvinistic help of males in her congregation). She instructed on the ordering, directed the cooking and serving, and held her peace when her church finally decided that a mere woman should not be giving instructions to MEN! But until then…

For the Friday evening supper, it had to be something that could be prepared in the brief time from the dismissal of school (the assemblies were frequently held in public schools) until the evening session fired off at perhaps 7:30. Pre-cooked beef or chicken brought to the site in electric roasters and noodles was a very workable combination. So, on the occasion question, about 4 or 5 weeks before the assembly, Mother sent out the call to surrounding congregations that they should provide so many dozens of eggs, made into noodles. One of the nearby congregations had a lady, whom Mother knew, who was of much heart, but little knowledge. She had never made noodles in her life, but gallantly decided to try. She got some sort of instructions, and had at it. After all, with just flour, eggs, salt, and water…what could go wrong? Well, you could have a problem when it came to rolling them out, or you could forget to dry them before you sacked them up. Gallantly she mixed the dough. She had never owned a rolling pin so she fed the dough through the wringer of her washing machine! It emerged about half-inch thick in the middle; gallantly, she cut them into some sort of strips **WITHOUT DRYING ENOUGH** (if at all); gallantly, she sacked them up…in plastic.

Mother never let the lady know how they came out, finally. She also swore her kitchen staff to secrecy (But Mother, the Lady, and about all of that Staff have now gone off to that Great Heavenly Noodle Factory in the Sky.) For, when Mother met those noodles, there was no need to open the package. They were furry, and green! Chia-pet noodles if you will!

And, for a breather, how many tales could be told of the results of mistaking one spice can for another (try putting mustard in your pumpkin pies, for instance). Or mistaking salt for sugar and putting a cup of the former in a batch of cookies, of switching powdered sugar for flour and trying to make your baked steak gravy with the former, of missing Mother's instructions about browning a meringue on a cream pie and serving your soft pies with RAW meringue…while telling folks, "Yes, sir! Hazel Stackhouse taught me how to make these pies!" And not realizing that a rice pudding is to be made with precooked rice (The father, a loving parent if one ever lived, could only eat the first spoonful of his dear daughter's pudding.).

In closing, perhaps it would be well to admit that Mother did not always have a triumph in the kitchen, but it was through no misapplication or a recipe. Hers were more the failings of starting something on the stove and then getting a phone call. Smoke! Or, Mother put the quart of string beans in the canner and then forgot them until (phone again) the house took on that peculiar hot metal smell. She foolishly cracked the "dogs" on the canner lid , thereby admitting cold air into the super-heated canner. A resulting explosion of one can blew a hot string bean up her dress sleeve, leaving an ugly blister that took weeks to heal. And, the steam burns on her forehead gave her a distinctly "boiled-owl" look for weeks. "No more canning", she vowed, and she held to her resolution nearly a year!

Perhaps in closing, it is the knowledge of these occasional mishaps that heighten our enjoyment of our cooking triumphs.

◆

Amish Sugar Cookies

(I must interject here. My mother-in-law having been the lady who had the tragic cookie/hockey puck incident that there is one type of cookie that she can make. This recipe makes a delicious soft sugar cookie that almost melts in your mouth.)

Amish Sugar Cookies

Cream Together:

2 cups Crisco oil
4 eggs
3 cups sugar

Add:

2 cups buttermilk
3 tsps. vanilla
1 ½ tsps. salt
2 tsps. soda
½ tsp. ginger

Mix Well and Add:

6 cups flour
2 tsps. baking powder

Drop by spoonfuls on greased cookie sheet. Sprinkle with sugar and nutmeg if desired. Bake at 375° to 400° for 8 to 10 minutes.

West 7th Street Sukiyaki

A few years ago (1969) a fellow callow youth and I journeyed to Far Japan for an international Lions Convention. While there, we partook of the tourist cuisine (at those prices, the locals could little afford those goodies). Their "display" dishes were very labor intensive, and the ingredients for the sukiyaki began with Matasuzaka beef, then retailing for $40 per pound (comparable to Kobe Beef, at an even higher price!) The meals cost us about $12 apiece, as did the delectable tempura. Our reaction was,

to the taste: "Delightful!"
to the cost: "Once in a lifetime is enough!"
to the expertise: "Hey Papa-San! We could do that back in the old St. Joe Valley!"

And so, it came to pass, that when we returned to the unsuspecting arms of our community, we invited all those who had been so kind as to give us the nice "going away" party…we invited them to a sukiyaki dinner. A friend volunteered the use of his home, which had one room capacious enough for the specially built table we used, a four foot circular table on ten-inch legs! This allowed our guests to experience bone-wrenching discomfort while undergoing the witchery of chop-stickery. And as HE is my witness, a good time was had by all!

And since recipes are the foundation of this tome, here's how you may re-create this magic moment.

The Equipment *(For each four guests):*

One Cook
One large electric fry-pan
One pair, looooooong cooking chopsticks
One two-quart saucepan (for rice)
One small waterbath (to heat the sake)
Four medium soupbowls
Four small soupbowls

Four small sake cups
Four pair disposable chopsticks

The Ingredients

¼ lb. Finest quality beef *per guest* (Japanese use Matasuzaka or Kobe beef $50/lb. currently)
small piece suet
2 10 oz. Packages frozen spinach - thawed
1 small can, each, bean sprouts, water chestnuts, button mushrooms, bamboo shoots
1 #2 ½ can yam noodles, or cooked dry yam noodles to equal
1 ½ lb. unprocessed rice (it must be gummy when cooked, do not rinse)
2 bunches green onions sliced diagonally, tops reserved for soup garnish
Soy sauce
Beef bullion
2 oz. Dried shitake mushrooms, reconstituted in 1 qt. boiling water
1 bottle sake

Plan of Battle

Hours before	Arrange ingredients tray. Let the artist in you loose here a gorgeous display is half of this meal, anyhow. Make Betty Crocker proud of you.
30 Minutes before	Start the rice cooking, make up the bullion, soak the shitake mushrooms
15 Minutes before	Cook the dried yam noodles (if you are using these), put sake flask in waterbath, but keep it under 140°, lest the alcohol boil off
The Guests Arrive	Take names of next-of-kin, preferred hospital and doctor. Then, seat guests, enjoying all the while the merry creaking of joints. When the moans have subsided, serve the soup.
The Soup	Ladle bullion into the small bowls, float one button mushroom in each bowl, sprinkle with cross-cut onion tops, and garnish with dried seaweed. **Chopsticks Only!** (Inform them that an Oriental will lift the bowl to just under his chin, "chopstick" the solid ingredients, and drink the remainder. Slurping permissible). Orientals might well serve this soup in the middle of the meal, but you'll have enough "culture shock" without that!
The Sukiyaki	Put the fry-pan at 350° to start. Lubricate the surface with the lump of suet. Then, quickly, quickly, lay in the skillet 8 slices of paper thin sliced beef (Have your butcher cut it for you in advance). Immediately, turn them one by one, and

then immediately push them to one side and reduce the temperature to 250°. Sprinkle the beef lightly with soy sauce. It will be nicely done when the rest of the dish is finished. – Next, add the ingredients from your display tray, taking great care that each is placed in the same relative position it had on the tray, and that they are mixed together as little as possible! (The Chinese may do it that way, but not the Japanese!) Begin with the spinach, and allow an extra 10 minutes if you are brave enough to use fresh leaf spinach (not really recommended). Then sprouts, chestnuts, mushrooms (both shitake and button), and maybe bamboo shoots, if you have ‘em. Keep the pan moist by adding the mushroom liquor and the beef bullion as needed. You want a spooning quantity of liquid at the finish. As you turn the cooking ingredients, again be careful not to mix them. Total cooking time so far, about 20 minutes.

Serving the guests If you’ve had a lull, give them a chopstick lesson. If they can write with a pencil, they can learn chopsticks in a minute.—For each guest, in a medium bowl place a couple of tablespoons of the good, gummy rice, leveled off. On that base, and in the same position as on the tray and in the fry-pan, place the unmixed ingredients. Sprinkle the spinach well with soy sauce before serving—you could change a spinach-hater into a fan! When you have a bowl “loaded”, spoon some pan liquor over it.

And, when you have the four of them served, reload the fry-pan for round #2. They’ll express preferences “less of this, more of that”, in the second round. **You will not have time to join them in the meal.**

Other considerations: Serve the yam noodles on a separate plate—they’re beautiful, just by themselves. Smoked oysters and canned octopus make fine appetizers with this meal, and are a hilarious challenge to any Purdue-type “meat and potatoes” eaters. (Yes, Virginia, I did try them on a Purdue man once!)

The sake? Heated to about 140° poured into “cutesy-poo” little cups, and drunk with a flip. That could put Julia Child on the wagon. Yuuck!

Dessert. Not really in Oriental demand, but try one perfect canned peach half with a couple of red gardenia petals on it.

Scholarly note: That Matasuzaka or Kobe beef is authentically higher than a cat’s back, and you would be too if you had been pen-raised, had your daily fodder cut and carried to you, had been given both bottled beer to drink and massaged with straw to force the fat to the surface into the tissue, kept until 4 years old and perhaps 50%larger than American steers, and then whisked off to that Great McDonalds in the Sky! In '78 on another tour of Japan, I showed a friend the prices in the meat department of the Matsukaya Department Store in Tokyo, and the prices were the $35 per pound class (and the sukiyaki dinner was up to $22).

But, "a grand old recipe". NOT! Most of the Japanese would not have been able to afford beef, now or centuries ago. Sukiyaki means something like "cooked on a plowshare", and is thought to be no more than 100 years old at most.

Atmosphere? Some recorded samisen or koto music twangs up the place just fine! I always cook in my yukata (summer Japanese kimono), it has sash sleeves, sewn shut, and each will hold nearly a week's laundry, not to mention lots of cooking tools!

Hate someone real good! Use bean curd in the recipe. The overalls in Mrs. Murphy's chowder were gourmet food compared to bean curd! Your samisen or koto music will sound to some a bit like J.S. Bach. Tell them it's really by your friend Johann Sebastian Suzuki!

And the best sukiyaki I ever ate? Well, may Hotei-bara have a bigger belly than mine if it wasn't **The Nikko Inn** in North Cincinnati, O-High-O!!!

So, sayonara, sukiyaki seekers!

A PARTY EVERY NIGHT!

I've been around foods all of my life. My mother was a commercial cook of renown. I was in the 72nd and 73rd Mess Corps in the US Army. I handled the Concessions for schools for nearly 25 of my teaching years. And, in the summers of 1983 and 1987, I "dabbled" in a catering kitchen.

The last two of these were provocative pleasures. I accepted no payment for my spotty services; occasional leftovers (splendid fare), and a complementary catering of my mother's funeral dinner, but no formal pay. It was a pleasure. I am a natural putterer, especially with foods. I could do all the salads and cheese & relish trays, and take all the time that I wanted to give them cosmetic impact. After all, I wasn't going to be held to any standard of cost effectiveness when I hadn't any real cost!

I suppose the most stimulating thing about it was that you were throwing a party every night, so to speak. You got to play with expensive foods and the finest of ingredients, and someone else paid for it! And by and large, the parties were eminently successful. Our catering manager was a woman of high and inflexible standards; done her way, it would be a dandy!

But, on three occasions, it wasn't a dandy. It was a crying shame, though no fault of hers. The West Virginia hills draw her like a magnet, and over the Memorial Day holiday of 1987, she would return there . . . IF I would backstop a newly hired cook. Some cook!

I was to share the kitchen with a replacement cook who could and did do everything -- POORLY! Ah! She bragged up a storm, and it is likely that which got her the job from our nice but inexperienced owner. And had she been able to cook as well as she bragged, we should have deserved Four Michelin stars. As it was, we were probably lucky that the Board of Health didn't shut us down!

Disaster #1 . . . not totally her fault, but she participated. We were doing a function for 150, a chicken barbecue. We borrowed the Legion's half-barrels to cook the chicken in the host's driveway. Spring; cold; windy; and the heat ended up in Ohio. Runs were made to the catering hall to cook chicken in the steam cauldron, but it was still rubbery and bloody.

The meal called for baked beans. How many? The frump should have known, but she made up three 4' steam table pans full (probably enough for 200 people, and only 65 actually showed up.) But, a kitchen interloper of her acquaintance talked her into preparing yet a fourth pan of beans. Boy Oh Boy, did we have beans left over! Said interloper was later to figure in Disaster #3 by making up about **5 gallons** of mustard/dill pickle relish/salad dressing to be put on the potato salad. Think baby diapers!

The only thing that survived that day was MY melon boats, hellishly expensive in the off-season, but pretty to look at and good to eat. That's about all that satisfied them, and we were never bothered by their custom again.

Disaster #2 . . . the Teddibly, Teddibly Important Family's Reunion. Just a week later: broasted chicken, baked steak, mashed & gravy, veggie, & melon boat. She claimed to know how to operate the chicken broaster, which demands 12-15 minutes of 275° frying under pressure. The time IS critical. She paid no attention and produced the driest chicken, fully tooth-resistant, ever seen locally. The baked steak was to be dredged in flour, browned on the grill, ranked in pans, foiled, and baked to moist perfection. She did NOT brown it, and she did NOT foil it. Beef hockey pucks is what it was! She attempted to make gravy (There should have been adequate stock with the baked steak) from commercial beef extract, a very salty proposition. The gravy was so salty that it could not be eaten. The manager returned from West Virginia just in time to see her cooking a raw potato in the gravy, trying to absorb some of the salt. There was no help for it. Again, the melon boat was the only thing that satisfied them, and they took it home with them. We saw them not again.

Culminating Disaster #3 – the "Piece de Resistance" and boy-o did they resist! We knew her for a total fraud by now, but the owner, a bit too tender hearted, could not bring himself to cut her loose — Until the **BROWNIES and the big industrial picnic.** Guest list, 1000 (There's gold in them thar' mills!) Menu: broasted chicken, potato salad, (The manager's daughter performed heroically, doctoring the dressing to make it palatable…threw half of it out she did!) The Fraud took the brownie production unto herself. On Tuesday and Wednesday, she violated the manufacturer's instructions (to add ONLY water) and put in oil and eggs, thereby converting a doughy, sticky brownie to fluffy, fragile cake. And, she did not oil and flour the baking pans, nor did she use parchment paper in them. And then, 5 pounds of Crisco® were combined with a blizzard of powdered sugar (AND SOME WATER, I think). With three days to set up before the picnic, **white armor plate is what it was!** Then the "artiste" in her struck, and she brought in her pastry decorating kit to put two initials (the company's logo) on top of every single brownie. She tinted frosting red and it bled into the white; she tinted frosting black and it hemorrhaged into the white!

Our manager blew her cool, and told the fraud that at the rate she was going, she'd be there next week. She stopped.

The picnic came. The brownies totally resisted coming out of the pan in anything but small fragments. Not a half a dozen of them were used before the whole 1,000 of them were abandoned totally. Had it not been for 1,000 back-up cookies, the wee ones would have been sorely disappointed. Three or three and a half days of totally wasted effort, and she wasn't cheap, either!

At last, the owner acknowledged what his manager had been telling him, and told the frump that they would call her when next they needed her. She sailed out without cleaning her pastry kit. It lay about the kitchen for a month or so; no one would have touched it! Finally, we "land-filled" it.

But, sometimes when I see a backside abundant engulfing a kitchen stool, I think of her. She really tried to cook, sitting of a stool.

And all those beans in #1…another tale altogether.

Why Don't Things Taste That Good Anymore?

(Reprinted from ...On Further Reflection)

I read devotedly, each Wednesday morning, the pronouncements of Sandy Thorn Clark, food critic extraordinaire, of the Ft. Wayne Journal-Gazette; and I watch, sometimes twice a day, the "Great Chefs" programs on the Discovery Channel on TV. These acts cause me to now make two points to the reader: that I am NOT, I repeat, **NOT** a gourmet! (A lady once cut me from her list of lukewarm friends because I would not serve as a food critic of similar assignment an a fledgling Ft. Wayne magazine, not recognizing that I talk a much meaner menu than I ever eat!) In truth, I'm interested in the process, and the FLAMING EXCESSES of the so-called great chefs; but it does not mean that I could emulate them, nor am I competent to judge their efforts.

And the second point: that nothing they cook looks half as delicious as legend tells us the foods of the past were. But...were they? I think so.

Everyone's mother was, of course, a great cook. To a hungry child...to a ravening teenager...anyone is a great cook, yes? Benjamin Franklin had it right when he said, "Hunger is the best pickle (appetizer)". Ordinary foods, eaten with great appetite and in the presence of congenial companions (Families sometimes qualify, if there are not too many sisters!) become gourmet treats. And consider the last point seriously; if you can recall the finest meals of your life, weren't they some sort of celebratory occasion with someone you loved?

Oh, indeed, I can agree that ingredients in the old days were superior: the range-run chickens with the golden skin; "un-tin-ned" freshly grated nutmeg; vegetables FRESH from your own garden (and picked dead ripe); lard-based pie crusts; triple-sifted cake flours lovingly enfolded in strictly "from scratch" recipes; and time, TIME, **TIME** in a perfumed kitchen--all lent to a superior result.

I eat many meals alone now; the food doesn't entice me. I eat many "boxed", "store bought", "prepared" meals now, and they just don't taste like Mother's cooking.

I have virtually given up reading the pronouncements of the health authorities, who seem to tell me that everything I eat or like is bad for me. Too much reading of the "experts" (who in most cases can be counted on to hold diametrically opposite views in a further 10 years, anyhow!) is, in my unhumble opinion, worse for me.

And, sometimes, I watch the great chefs, thinking that if I cannot peel/pare away, grate away, boil away, or SAUTÉ away 90% of whatever I'm cooking, the rest can't be worth marooning on a large plate in a sea of strange sauce and thinking that the millennium, gustatorily speaking, has arrived.

But then, I return comfortable to the lasting image of the finest meal of my adolescence...and it wasn't my mother's, either. I bowled on the Auburn Diner Bowling team. Herman Tritch, owner of the Diner, pretended to understand the great advertising value his juvenile team had. So, whenever we won only one game in an evening--no reward. Two games, 10 cents in trade. Three games, 15 cents. And 15 cents would buy one of Herman's hamburgers..."Nature's most-nearly-perfect-food," and a bottle of pop. Herman would toast the bun on the grill, cook the hamburger perfectly (without benefit of McDonald's Instruction School), top it with a single perfect slice of onion, and allow us the use of the house's home-made horseradish mustard! The gods did not eat any better than that! (In Mother's restaurant hamburgers were pan fried, and simply could not compete with Herman's grill.) Of course, Herman's hamburger was eaten with Goldie and Jason and other team members...no small part of the mystique of the occasion.

(Herman, Jason, and Goldie have all gone to meet their Maker. It's worth my trudging onward just to keep the memory of those hamburgers alive.)

And yes, I do remember some...many....a myriad of good things from my mother's kitchen and restaurant and I am not alone there. One gentleman came in afternoons at four for warm apple pie and milk, knowing that Mother would have put the pies in the oven just before leaving for home and her afternoon nap. The kindly hardware owners from next door, for years after Mother gave up the restaurant, were abundant in their gratitude whenever Mother fashioned a sugar cream pie for them. The telegraph operator came on Saturday night about every 5 or 6 weeks for fried chicken livers. The Sunday dinner crowds ate her superb baking powder biscuits for 9 wonderful years, as well as the host of home-made.....TRULY HOME-MADE...pies...the butterscotch, the pumpkin, and the fabulous mincemeat. And, I came to know that there is no finer craftsman than a good home cook.

Maude Gatten's Meatloaf

Mama worked for Maude Gatten, the cook in the St. Joe Hotel kitchen, for a brief period between quitting school (1912) and getting married (1914). The recipe I still find delectable is the souvenir of that experience.

Maude Gatten's Meatloaf

2 ¾ pound good hamburger
¼ pound good bulk sausage (NOT "hot", not "Italian"…just good plain sausage)
2 eggs beaten
1 slice stale bread, soaked thoroughly in warm water squeezed out
chopped onion to taste
chopped sweet bell pepper to taste
salt heartily
pepper generously

Allow the meat to come to room temperature. Mix in the eggs, and the remaining ingredients. Form into a loaf in a covered roasting pan, and pour a cup of water about it. Bake in a 350° oven for a full hour. Allow to rest briefly, then move to a serving dish and allow it to air for 15 to 20 minutes. (That is when it will take on the beautiful brown surface color).

HLS variations: I also add oregano, garlic powder (generously), Worcestershire sauce and / or Tabasco ® sauce (as the mood strikes me), and sometimes cover the surface with canned hot-dog chili sauce, or whole tomato slices. Serve with antacid tablets! Makes great cold sandwiches…and…when was the last time you had meatloaf gravy? Take a wire whisk and whisk the daylights out of the pan drippings. Thicken as you would another gravy. It will be a "flecked" gravy, but tasty.

SIDE ORDERS

The Lady Makes A Salad

It was pretty obviously France's loss, and America's gain when a later-day acquaintance of mine married a French bride and brought her to Indiana and environs. With her came her Gaelic food history, never more appealingly revealed than in the celebrated "Rina's Salad".

The ingredients? Your own favorite choice of LEAF LETTUCES, PROPERLY PREPARED. The lettuce must be well inspected, and carefully washed. Then, it must be dried. If you have a salad spinner, fine. If not, take a large bath towel, nestle the lettuce in it, and send your best baseball pitcher outdoors to "whip" the water out of it. But, DRY IT MUST BE!

The dressing? Add all ingredients in the dressing at the same time. Allow the dressing to marinate for at least half an hour. Then, just before serving, apply the dressing to the dry, crisp lettuces and toss lightly. A salty dressing, but it is pure ambrosia. When the guests want a second serving of salad (and they will, they will!), apply dressing to the next batch of lettuce. And, if you have any leftovers of the salad, it will be surprising. (I have seen it eaten wilted by an avid saladholic, but it's better crisp and fresh!)

The Dressing:

6 Green onions, sliced 1" diagonally
4 Tbls. good salad oil, *Extra Virgin olive oil is nearly good enough*
2 Tbls. red wine vinegar
Salt & Pepper to taste (and I like it rather salty)

add to:

2 bunches leaf lettuce (For B. Bartels, quadruple!)

A Pair of Winners From Mother Walters

In other works by this author, tribute has been paid to Silas Teddy Walters and his remarkable clan…a father and uncle who served in the Civil War, and with Ted himself, represented a span of 151 years…and good cooks, of course. Not the least of these was "Aunt Mildred", Ted's sister-in-law. The children of Melvin & Mildred Walters were an advertisement both of their mother's fine cooking and an appealing, placid temperament; and while I cannot demonstrate that temperament on paper, I can give you a couple of recipes that fueled her sturdy offspring.

First, the charming "County Line Cheese" ® Salad, as originally written down by Mildred herself:

County Line Cheese Salad

1 large can sliced pineapple
15¢ worth of marshmallows
20¢ worth of County Line Cheese, cut up
1 cup whipping cream

The Dressing
2 Tbls. Vinegar, then fill cup with enough water to make ½ cup
1 cup sugar
1Tbls. Flour
2 eggs
Lump of butter

Cook these ingredients for the dressing until thickened. Then cool and pour over mixture. Add whipped cream and mix well

Kind of "pinch 'n dabby"? Well, yes. You'd get SUCH a look from a grocer today trying to buy just 20¢ worth of cheese like that…and for that matter, you'd not find anything like the original County Line Cheese ®, which has gone the way of Merger, Buy-out, Consolidation, and Blah!

In the hands of a daughter-in-law (also suspected of being a fine cook), the ingredients list has been refined just a bit:

1 20 oz. Can chunk pineapple, drained
10 ½ oz. Pkg. miniature marshmallows
½ lb. good Colby cheese (County Line, if you still have faith), cut in small cubes
1 cup whipping cream, beaten, sweetened, and flavored

The Dressing? Essentially the same directions, save that the eggs are to be beaten and it is 2 Tbls. of butter. When you reach the whipping cream, add 2 Tbls. of sugar and ½ tsp. of vanilla while whipping and then fold gently through the ingredients and cooled dressing.

It was / is such a dessert as to have people jockeying for position at the dessert table when this confection was unveiled!

Mom Walter's Sugar Cookies

The County Line Cheese Salad recipe was likely reserved for special occasions. This sugar cookie recipe was the fodder of which children…and lovely childhood memories are built. When turned out by the dozens, weekly, their ¾" thickness and 4" diameter, accompanied by a glass of milk or hot cup of tea, made an unbeatable snack for anyone…anytime of day.

Ingredients:

2 cups white sugar
1 cup lard
2 eggs, beaten
1 cup buttermilk
1 tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. grated nutmeg
1 tsp. vanilla
4-5 cups flour

Mix the ingredients in the order presented. Add enough more flour to be able to roll out on a cookie board. Cut out in cookie shapes, place on a greased cookie sheet, sprinkle with white sugar, and bake for 12 minutes in a 375° oven.
Then stand by for your own group of hunger marchers!

The author's addenda: I taught four of the children who were raised on such sound cooking. I personally doubt that any but the most resolute of mothers could have stopped most of that clan at ONE cookie apiece!

And…I shall not go by these recipes without thanking Mrs. Pat Leffler of Phoenix, AZ, (a niece of Melvin Walters) and Mrs. Ruth Walters, daughter-in-law of Mildred, for their generosity in dusting off these delightful recipes.

A Pair of Salads

I realize that if you read the Table of Contents of this book you'll notice that this tome is a little "heavy" on the dessert side. So here's my salute to good nutrition two very tasty salads. One comes courtesy of my friend Coleen DeCamp and the other is from her mother, Irene McLaughlin. --BB

Tri-Bean Salad

Dressing:
1 ½ cups sugar
1 ½ cups white vinegar
1 cup salad oil
2 tsps. Salt
2 Tbls. Italian salad dressing
Salad:
3 cans whole green beans (drained)
2 cans wax beans (drained)
2 cans red kidney beans (drained)
1 onion large (chopped coarsely)
1 green pepper (chopped coarsely)

Pour dressing over beans & gently mix. Chill & serve.

Cranberry Salad

2 packages Raspberry Jello®
3 cups hot water
Mix Jello® and water
1 pound cranberries (chopped)
2 cups sugar
1 cup diced celery
1 orange (ground)
1 cup walnuts (chopped)

Mix all ingredients and chill

The Delectable Frozen Fruit Dessert

(As presented by B. Stackhouse)

My mother rarely conceded anyone else's skill in cooking, but among her recipes were the following two, indicating a very high level of approval of her daughter-in-law and her granddaughter, "Bodey" Schwartz-Stackhouse and Mary Ann Stackhouse-Houser. First, the dessert:

Frozen Fruit Dessert

#2 can Mandarin orange segments
Small can crushed pineapple
#2 can peach sections, cut into 1" chunks
#2 can apricot halves
#2 can pitted black cherries

¾ cup powdered sugar
8 oz. Cream cheese
9 oz. pkg. (tub?) Cool Whip ®

Drain the fruit well, combine the last three ingredients, and then fold into the fruit. Fold gently, then freeze. Remove from freezer about 30 minutes before serving. (Very effective if frozen in a can that has had top and bottom removed, creating a circular "log").

The M. A. Houser Barbecue Recipe

Mama's barbecue was largely uninspired…it simply was not a country recipe, (and therefore learned after coming into contact with the commercial cooking world). I remember it as being somewhat "zip-less", especially as compared to the present day romance with the Habanero pepper. But…but…she had a granddaughter, exiled by Fate to one of the poor neighboring counties, who could and did cook in the "modern idiom". There are a splendid lot of things that this girl can whip up (as witnessed by the current dieting state of her spouse), but we shepherd our resources and offer just this one:

Barbecue

½ cup chopped onion
2 Tbls. cooking fat
½ tsp. salt
a dash black pepper
sm. dash cayenne pepper
2 Tbls. brown sugar
1 ½ cups catsup
2 Tbls. vinegar
¼ cup lemon juice
1 Tbls. Worcestershire sauce
1 Tbls. prepared mustard
¼ tsp. oregano

Mix all ingredients and simmer for 30 minutes. Then add

2 lb. ground beef, browned (or "pulled" pork / chicken / turkey)

Simmer together for a few minutes, and serve on sandwich buns.

Martha's Magic

To a generation of Auburnites, raised to expect that Martha Falka was immortal and that her delectable caramel corn would go on forever, her recent death may have produced more than the sadness felt at the passing of a warm and colorful character in town life. What of her expertise…must it, like her hearty cackle, be buried with her? Well, hardly!

For…if Martha could learn those recipes from the cherished Bernice Wible (and she did!) – and if Doc Trausch inherited the recipes along with the popcorn stand – then they can also be passed on to you (and with Doc's acquiescence, they are going to be!) In fact, Doc willingly resurrects not only the caramel corn recipe, but also tells us how the celebrated "oil-boiled" peanuts were prepared.

Martha's Caramel Corn

4 cups of popcorn, popped with salt (will fill most of a five gallon lard can)

3 lb. Brown sugar (2 light, 1 dark)

½ lb. butter (US government surplus worked just fine!)

1 ½ cups light Karo® syrup

2 cups water

ABSOLUTELY NO SODA

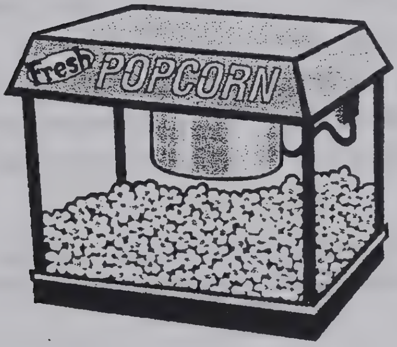
In a large copper cauldron (preferably), cook all but the popcorn until it reaches the "hard ball" stage. Remove from heat and add popcorn, Stirring with a wooden paddle until the corn is fully coated. Decant it all on a large marble slab while still hot and plastic; press flat with your aluminum popcorn scoop. When it has cooled completely, break it up by banging with the scoop, bag it in plastic (or back into the 5 gallon can with a TIGHT LID) and enjoy. Compare it with the typical "fairground" caramel corn. They should hang their heads in shame!

Oil-Boiled Peanuts

4 lb. uncooked redskin peanuts

5lb. popping compound, preferably not coconut oil based

Place in a slow cooker and simmer for 3 hours. Dip out on shallow tray to drain, and salt to taste.



Rose Buttermore's Pecan Brittle

For such a wee shred of a woman, there was much to like about Rose Buttermore. The following recipe was the happy bonus for a casual act of kindness I was able to do for Rose a couple of summers back. (I had stumbled on an orchard with stunning Canadian Pride peaches. I bought a lot of them to repay acts of kindness done me by various ladies. When delivering some to Cousin Freida Dailey,Rose came out of her apartment to tell me that my cousin wasn't at home. An amiable chat led to me presenting Rose with some of the beautiful fruit, and a few days later, Rose reciprocated the gift with the finest confection I may every have eaten, pecan brittle. Rose had shared the recipe with friends, and following Rose's recent demise, one of them passed it on to me. And…I to you….)

Rose Buttermore's Pecan Brittle

1 cup Karo white syrup

2 cups granulated sugar

¼ cup boiling water

2 tbs. Butter

1 cup pecans

2 tsp. baking soda

Combine the syrup, sugar, and water and cook until it reaches “hard ball” stage, cracks or spins in cold water. Then, add the pecans and the butter, and cook onward to a golden brown (300°). Add the baking soda, stir, and pour into two shallow, buttered pans. When it is barely cool enough to handle, STRETCH on the pan as you might taffy, and let harden. The result will be gauze of brittle between clumps of pecans. Shatter, Ziplock, and stand by for the compliments.

Quince Honey

(Reprinted from ...On Further Reflection)

As a child, I knew (as did most boys of my generation) where the best (or most accessible) fruit trees grew. I was never aware of the overt exchange of the information, one child to another, but none the less, we somehow came to know where the early transparent apples could be found, and where the ox-heart cherry tree was. Both of these were, for a fact, in the backyard of a genial neighbor, Bill Scott of W. 11th Street. But, never...never did any of us know...or even care to know...the location of any quince trees. The reason? You simply could not / did not eat a quince in hand. They were very hard, even when fully ripe; they were generally ugly, being given to strange discolorations, warts, and bumps on their banana-yellow surface; and, they were stunningly astringent. You might well have called them alum fruit!

But, in the hands of a very few jam and jelly makers, there could occur a conversion from the ridiculous to the sublime, literally. The end product, passed through such gifted hands, was quince honey. Quince honey was that sort of a perplexing product as to be simple to describe and difficult to make. It required extraordinary attention while cooking. It did!

The recipe was simple enough: just sugar, water, grated quince, and lemon juice...and slavish dedication. My mother, a gifted cook, infused it with rather more drama than necessary when she insisted that the quinces must be grated by hand--no food processor would have been allowed. But if she over exaggerated there, she was on the mark when she demanded total concentration while it cooked. From the moment it was introduced to heat, one must stir constantly. It seemed ridiculous to me, at first; but it had such a great amount of sugar compared to the water that it would burn remarkably easily. So, stir over the heat you must. And, additionally, you knew when this jam of the gods was finished by its color, and you must watch every moment for it to reach just that stage. It would begin cooking as a lemon-yellow or straw-yellow mix. As it reached boiling, gradually the grated quince would almost magically seem to disappear--they became nearly transparent in the sickening syrup. Nearing the end of cooking time, the syrup assumed much of the consistency of a good popcorn glaze, while the whole affair began to subtly shift from lemon to honey to delicate rose to a translucent pink. Then, quickly from the heat and into smallish jam glasses. As hard as the quinces were to grate, and as long as the watching and stirring had taken, you would not have been tempted to give it away in very large quantities, anyhow. For that matter, I never saw my mother make more than 4 or 5 glasses of it in a batch. It was some precious!

How precious? My mother and Mayor Jerry Oren traded gourmet items; His morel mushrooms for her quince honey.

There were added results of this preparation. No matter how carefully you had tried to contain everything, there was a tendency of everything in the kitchen to seem sticky after a batch. A meticulous, dear friend of my sisters tried the recipe out this fall. She reported with delight on the success of the recipe she had used, and with woe on the condition of her previously spotless kitchen.

But then, on a given morning, you could experience heaven on your taste buds: toast and quince honey. And if you wished to admit someone to the rarest plateau of friendship, you gave them a small glass of the honey.

I knew of few other uses for the paradoxical quince. Oh, on even more rare occasions, Mother made a sort of conserve of quince very thinly sliced quinces and hard winter pears--no Bartletts for this please. In this mixture, both the tough quince slices and the tough pear slices eventually came to an al dente consistency. I never quite understood whether you were to put it on your toast, as the world's toughest marmalade; or just eat it as a hypersweet sauce.

The other use: not really much recommended. For, it came to pass on one Halloween that Mother, who had been giving the little extortioners apples for their boodle bags, ran out of apples. She turned in her exasperation, to an overabundance of quinces and dropped these into their bags. One can well imagine the carnage as the rock-hard quince, dropped from 2 feet above, hit the tender cookies. A dear old aunt, visiting us that year, remarked to her, "Hazel, when those children find out what you've given them, they're going to throw them right through your windows!" Well, they never did...and they never will, I guess.

Ambrosia Revisited -
-*Quince Honey*

Hedy Lamarr (Delilah), the Austrian bon-bon, slithers about a couch in a most suggestive manner, watching the number the Philistines are doing on Victor Mature (Samson). (Old Movie!) Among other signs of her decadence, she is eating some sort of gooey confection from a golden spoon. Well, rejoice Trivia Lovers! I know what it was…it was a Biblical version of quince honey! Nothing else would have clung to the spoon in such a provocative fashion (and Samson would have brought down the temple, not in anger at Philistia in general, of the false god, Dagon, in particular…Oh no! Just plain frustration that Delilah did not share the quince honey with him!) Obviously true, if you have ever tasted quince honey…

Marauding through Mother's old cookbooks, I came across her instructions, written in much the same hand, I fancy, of that little message from the "Sponsor" that Daniel read from the walls of the palace in Babylon. Deviate a whisker, and it's "mene, mene" to you too, baby!

The recipe begins "quinces are very funny." (Especially if you drop them in a Halloween "boodle-bag" from about 3'. They'll do a number on every cookie in the bag!) They are for a fact, lemon-y yellow, stone-hard, puckery beyond belief, slightly fuzzy, and pretty hard to find anymore. But, in the hands of a very patient cook, nothing…**nothing…NOTHING** can be so rewarding!

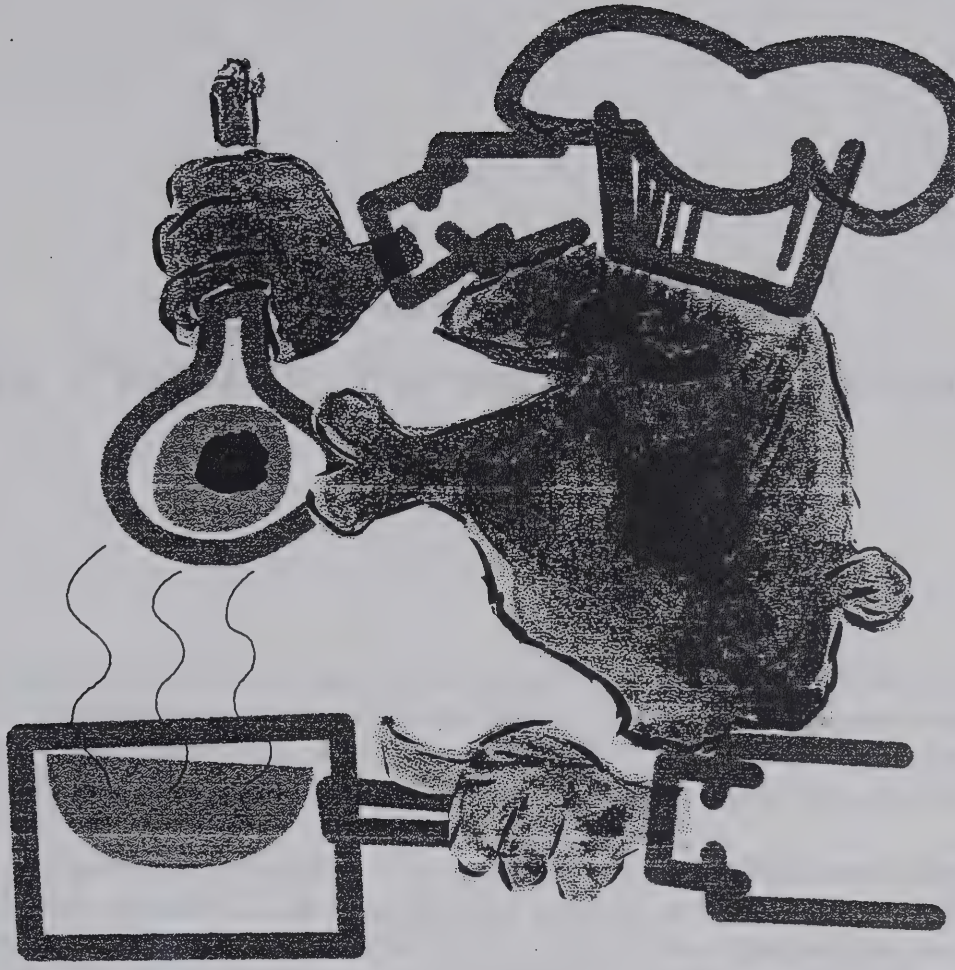
To begin then: "Quinces should be grated for honey. About 3 medium size grated, add 3 cups of sugar and ¾ cup of water. Put over heat, only letting them simmer, stirring often until a drop don't want to come off the spoon. If you cook overdone, they will get thick. If you cook too fast, they will not be pink. Quinces pulverized will only make marmalade, not honey."

Quince jelly? Take centers and peelings, let simmer for about 2 hours [Until you have 2 cups of liquid remaining - HLS]. Add 1 cup of sugar, continue to simmer, and watch carefully. Will produce fine jelly, 1 glass.

The son's commentary: This honey…or even the weaker jelly…is fit for no one of lesser stature than Mother Theresa. It is exacting, slow, tedious…whatever…to make, and it deserves some pretty finicky giving. But on warm toast. you'll know why Vic flexed his pecs!

Those same quinces, peeled and sliced very thin, can be quietly simmered with hard winter pear slices, sugar, and lemon juice to make a delectable "tough marmalade". *(Also try a few thin lemon slices cooked in this marmalade – delectable).* You may note with some interest that the quince tends to turn nearly transparent when simmered and your final quince honey will be a honey-pink color with a pebbly texture. And, my, is it good!

And, yes…my Mother DID drop quinces in Halloween sacks, once!



FOR THE HEARTY APPETITE!

Frumenty, That Is!

(or Frumity, Fermenty, and Fermity)

In preparing this article, I relied on an adhesive memory and sought an article from a 1950's Scientific American, an article charmingly titled "The Ethnogastronomy of the First Thanksgiving" (the peculiar eating habits of the Pilgrims). Wiped out is what I got, despite heroic efforts by my local library to locate the article through their "lending" network.

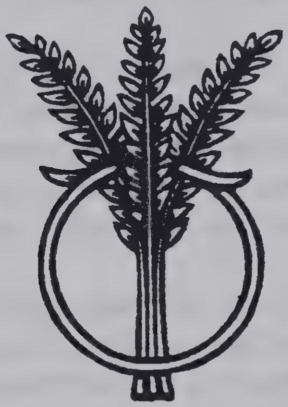
What had I hoped to gain? 1. A specific menu for the first Harvest Home Festival (The Pilgrims would NOT have celebrated a religious holiday thusly, even though they were properly grateful to Divine Providence for their survival. Instead, they took part in a typical English autumnal village event that celebrated a good harvest.) 2. Commentary on the dietetic demands of the vigorous Pilgrim farm life. And, 3. A recipe for one particular dish they favored, "frumenty".

As to the menu, it relied heavily on game, and the village huntsmen had been so successful with deer and turkey that three or four of them brought back enough meat for both Pilgrims and Indian guests to feast for two or three days…and they could FEAST!

That Pilgrim diet? Its demands were not much different that those of my grandfathers, who farmed by substantially the same methods, though removed by nearly 300 years from their age. Six thousand calories were required for a grown man. For the Pilgrims, that meant at least 1 ½ lb. of meal, made up into gruel, mush, or breads; it required ½ pound of butter or cheese, DAILY. Other vegetables and fruits figured in, as they were available, but grain was the basis. The author raised the speculation that the plenteous seafood would have helped some, and tantalized us with the spectacle of unlimited lobster. "Not so, " was his conclusion, for 1. The Pilgrim regarded lobster as a trash food, fit for pigs only! And, 2. Lobster, of itself, is a poor source of calories. One would have to tackle some 60 pounds of lobster in the shell to gain the 6000 calories. It is definitely the drawn butter that does the number on our diets!

But the frumenty? There is scant material on frumenty, other that the original article. Modern encyclopedias do not abound with information, but they do reveal that it could be made with milk as well as simply water. And what was it? Ancient Biblical soul food is what it was. It is described as a nearly perfect food, and it is mentioned in the Bible in the reverent tone. For you to make it, take two pounds of red wheat and boil it for 10 minutes in a quart of water. Then, putting a close fitting lid on the pan, place overnight in an oven that has at least a pilot light burning. In the morning, the result will be a swollen mass of wheat, much of it un-hulled, in a jelly. That product could be used for a breakfast food (add honey and dried fruits if you wanted a Biblical dish) We might serve it with butter, brown sugar, and half-and-half (Well, I would have, until recently!). Or, one might sweeten it and lace it with dried currants or raisins and bake it as a pudding. As the author observed, "It had soul!"

But have I EVER seen it done? Yes, indeedy. One of my students,having heard this material in my American Literature Class, tried it out at home and brought me a sample in a pint jar. I wasn't swept away by it, immediately; but as I got a bit hungrier during an after-school activity, I found that it didn't go down too badly. Oh, it's not going to drive Battle Creek to the wall, but in Middle Eastern deserts, it probably would go down pretty well. Frumenty, that is!.



Of Herculean Proportion

At the time of my paternal grandfather's birth (1865), there had been virtually no change from the Pilgrim caloric demand (approximately 6,000 calories a day, HEAVILY relying on fats), at least among the farming population, we were still HEARTY eaters. Grandfather's figure reflected his occupation and diet – about 5'9" and 250 pounds…and an early death by "apoplexy". Two of his sons also chose to farm, also reflected diet and occupation, but one escaped to his late 70's, while the other perished of diabetes, perhaps accelerated by diet, but certainly not primarily caused by it.

Odd material for a cookbook? Not really, for the vigor of their lifestyles commanded their wives to prepare meals that were, by the standards of 1995, tremendous. And if the ordinary, everyday meal was so impressive, then consider the THRESHERS' DINNER.

If an ordinary farm breakfast required fried potatoes, eggs, two or three breakfast meats, breads, coffee and even pie (after all, he HAD been doing his chores since 5 AM!); if dinner (Farmers did not eat "lunch") demanded more meats, plenty of home-grown and home-prepared vegetables, always mashed potatoes and gravy, beverages, and pies or other desserts; and supper somewhat repeated the demands of dinner (if in more modest proportions)…Then what, What were the proportions of the Threshers' Dinner? They were "English-Hunt-Breakfast" or "Family-Reunion-Potluck" in size. "Ready and plenty and piping hot," as Benet said in "John Brown's Body".

Only once was I privileged to attend such a threshers' meal; and as a child, I was forced to wait until the threshers should have filled themselves. Then the table was reset and hangers on…including the several ladies who assisted the farm wife…could have at it.

Perhaps the threshers' meal, with its monumental demands, came only that once a year; but the farmwife had a weekly regimen that might give one pause for thought. There were, of course the three very-square meals a day. Added to that were the weekly demand for breads—ten, fifteen, or twenty loaves—pies (dessert for every meal in several varieties)—and special labors of love (cookies for the children, up to 75 years of age;

cakes for company); and special baking for compassion(the ill, the needy); and Church socials; and, and, and…And washing on Monday, ironing on Tuesday…and gardening and typical housework.

The loss of the Mother, traumatic ever, was simply catastrophic on a farm…read the final chapter of the farm memoir, "The Land Remembers", and be devastated across a gulf of 90 years.

And…the mending, the sewing, the quilting…..Why it sounds positively Amish.

But, surely she had some help with it all? Well, homegrown help would have been most common…That is, when the children she had "birthed" herself grew sufficiently large. But until then, add child-care to her list of labors. It is even possible that she relished splitting her own stove wood and tending her own garden. They would have taken her out-of-doors for a moment at least. And she likely took a satisfaction in enriching her garden with potash (wood ashes); in salting her asparagus bed (the brine from the ice cream freezer), and possibly even making her own lye soap (the wood ashes again, and animal fats). Of course, the latter raises the additional duties associated with butchering and meat preservation, as well as the drying and canning of garden produce. Making all other things possible, just how well do you think a Jane Fonda exercise tape would have sold to that lady?

Viewing all of the forgoing, the demands of rural life on the domestic skills of the farmwife were massive. A sound marriage should have had a strain of practicality: Did he/she come of a family that produced lots of healthy children? Was her father an acknowledged good farmer? Was her mother a known good housekeeper and cook? Would they be adequately "dowered" to found a household? But, it must also be said (as the author Jessamyn West had her calm Quaker minister, Eliza, tell her daughter in "The Friendly Persuasion", that "Next to a kindly heart, it's good if he's handsome." Amid all those qualifications, they could hope for some romantic love, also.

And…a trove of recipes, passed down from mother to daughter (and now sometimes maddeningly incomplete for lack of such details as specific measurements, temperatures, and times). But, daughter having stood by her mother in the kitchen, would have developed a subliminal knowledge of cooking principles…a real "feel" for the art. I think great cooks still develop it; but since it can't be quantified in proper scientific manner, we just don't acknowledge it.

Soup's On!!!

And…at the most improbable moments…you get inspirations!

Recovering recently from a visit by all 12 tribes of the Parishes, it suddenly struck me that the world…I say, T*H*E*W*O*R*L*D, might like to know the bait used to assemble that illustrious clan. It was Ernestine Parish's modest vegetable soup recipe. (Of course! Everyone knows a simple recipe for veggie brew! But…do you know a dependable recipe that will serve 36, and have a winter's supply left for the house-host?) Read on, hungry reader.

First, the assembly of the ingredients. Keep a sharp eye out for those beef sales in early fall...20 pounds of boneless chuck roast are not a mere pittance. Bargains, ho! Likewise, 25-30 pounds of cabbage rewards careful bargain hunting. Beef marrow bones? Not free, and you need at least 15 pounds of them. So assemble:

20 pounds boneless chuck roasts, roasted in a slow oven until fork tender, and then SHREDDED. *Add water if needed.*

15+ pounds marrow bones, roasted at 250° for 5 hours (to a deeeeep brown cast), and then simmered another 4 hours (at least) to produce a broth you'd rather NOT gaze upon. (It will underpin a marvelous soup, but it looks and tastes yucky at this stage.) *About 3-4 gallons*

20 pounds (or even more) of firm cabbage, sliced/shaved with a fine kitchen knife. A slaw cutter would be déclassé.

10 pounds potatoes, peeled and cut into ½" - ¾" cubes. (I do not recommend cutting a finger at the same time…as I did this year. Pink potatoes ARE distinctive, but you feel rather dumb [and your guests look rather uneasy when you explain the bandage on your finger while they are probing a bowl of deep red soup!])

6 pounds carrots, peeled and cut into ¼" slices.

2 stalks celery, de-dirted, de-sanded, and cut into ¼" slices.

2 immense, I say, IMMENSE onions, medium diced.

4 #10 cans whole tomatoes, squoooshed (Okay, purists can cut them with a knife, but where's the fun of that?)

Salt, pepper, red pepper flakes to taste.
2 12 ounce packages frozen corn…added solely for the cosmetic appeal.

In Reserve
46 ounce cans of tomato juice. The ingredients given above will produce a soup as thick as the Okefenokee, but if you wish to "extend" the soup (in case another 36 guests show up), you can easily add the juice.

Directions:
Add everything last! (Well, it seems that way, sometimes!) Begin with your marrow broth, from which you have removed any discernible bits of marrow [It will float to the surface.] Divide it equally between two 20 quart enamel canners or MASSIVE soup kettles. Put ½ of the shredded beef in each kettle. (Oh yes…you did turn the burners on, didn't you?) Add the carrots, onions, celery and the tomatoes and raise it to a slow simmer…a slow 4-6 hour simmer all told. After an hour add the 20 pounds of shredded cabbage then after another 1-2 hours of simmering, you can add your potatoes and after another ½ hour, the corn. A correctly made soup will have identifiable vegetables in it. Overcooked, it will be a tasty vegetable gruel!

As the soup "develops", it will take on a lovely, Rockefeller-rich, red hue with beef and marrow fat glazing on the surface. Taste it frequently…you've earned it!

Avoid stainless steel kettles…they scorch rather too easily. If you have heat diffusers, use them on your burners. I'm sure that if you have added up costs, you know that you are $75.00 for ingredients alone, not to mention value of labor. What a dreadful pity to burn the soup, at this…or any price!

When you are done, go to bed (for you know that this had to be done the night BEFORE!) The soup will not cool off enough to get into any trouble, and you will fire it up again the next morning. You have a daughter who will eat soup for breakfast.

How to serve? Cozen a quaint little old breadmaker from Florence, KY into baking 13 loaves of homemade. Hie thyself to Hilger's Market in Columbia City to get 4 pints of black raspberry, 3 pints of cherry, and a few pints of other jams to put on that bread. Butter, of course! Have your little old breadbaker also make some of her GENUINE coffee. Assemble yahoo-many soup bowls and spoons, much paper toweling (West 7th Street napery), lots of coffee cups and mugs, and a fridge full of carbonateds and ice cubes. And, **TURN THEM LOOSE.**

Acceptance? They've been coming back for years. Some of the wretches may be suspected of an inverted gratitude…offering my name to storm door salesmen in the Industrial Tent at the Fair. But, they even do the dishes.

What, really, is in it for me? True, it was not cheap; but bachelors like the patter of little feet around the house once in a while, and this year, there were 76 strange little feet pattering—36 humans and one lovable little black doggie! I got my fridge cleaned out of such containments as 6 quarts of elderberries. I ended up with the surplus shaved cabbage, and it was a benison, for:

I sweated down 2 large handgrasps of shredded cabbage with 1 tsp. of olive oil, shot it with soy sauce, added a little vinegar and artificial sweetener, and had a VERY palatable NEW cabbage dish for me…and very low cal! I shall mix red wine vinegar, water, sweetener, celery salt, celery seed, pepper, a touch of olive oil, green pepper, chopped onion, and cabbage together for a vinegar slaw…again rather low cal!

But…but…most of all…for a while, GOOD FRIENDS and GOOD FOOD. (I send out eccentric invitations each year. Next year, maybe one to Heaven, so that HE can see, for one moment, what a Paradise could be!) (Distant rumble of thunder, flash of lightning—off stage left.)

DELICIOUS AFTERTHOUGHT: I discovered, while doing dishes yet the next day, that someone had left 5" of soup in the bottom of the kettle. That's enough to fill some cold, empty spots in the tummy on cold winter evenings! And, while stowing the bread after the Southern contingent arrived, two loaves inadvertently were placed in my underwear drawer under the black silk shorts (blush)! I haven't time just now to investigate, but my nephew has bravely volunteered to help dispose of the bread, me being on an inhumane 1000 calorie a day diet…theoretically.

Forgotten items:
4 pkg. of oyster crackers
One plate of deviled eggs
5 or 6 different varieties of homemade cookies…dozens…dozens!
One massive simmered-in-beer ham, a la P. E. Stackhouse II.
4-5 loaves superb "KY rye".
5 gallons Martha's Best Carmelcorn

and… NOT A SINGLE ANTACID TABLET!!!

Ambiance You Can Eat

For all of the brilliance a fine cook may bring to their craft, it still won't be **that truly great** meal unless you share it with someone you like / love. I think back on meals that stand out in my memory, and the WHO was as important as the WHAT of it all.

I know, for example, that I can give you the enclosed recipe for fried bread and apple butter…I can prepare it myself, should I choose. But, it will not measure up to having it with friends that first time at the Nashville House, nor with the Robert Wilder Apple Butter festival of perhaps 20 years back. The first of these occasions had the effervescence of a trip to IU (always a pleasure for we three alumni), the electric thrill of the State basketball Final, and the added pleasure we took of each other's company. The fried chicken entree was good, but no miracle. Their version of cole slaw left something to be desired. If you, or anyone, can make a side dish of nibblets corn into gourmet fodder, hats off to you! They couldn't. But, the unending trays of fried bread, attended by butter and apple butter, had an IMPACT. On your first sitting, you would have been hard pressed NOT to gorge yourself (On a second occasion, acquaintances of ours so over-indulged that they could not lean forward to see the game from the "eagle's nest" seating at IU Assembly Hall…and they were in bloated agony for the most of the evening session!) Acerbically, I must observe that it was almost worth the tab the Nashville House put on….but NOT QUITE! (And you should see the prices now! Make you proud to be a chicken, it would!)

Robert Wilder likes a challenge, and for the third time, he proved he could duplicate a "gourmet" offering (1. The Sukiyaki dinner he and the author re-created on their return from Japan in 1969. 2. Re-creating the Tally-ho of Logansport "twice-roasted" prime rib during the mid-70's)

Invitations were sent out to a generous assemblage of his friends, that they might repair to his home and driveway of an October Saturday afternoon for the making of open kettle apple butter. Mrs. Vivian Watts, one of this famous three, volunteered to tackle the fried bread. She of the fair complexion and lilting laugh mixed and raised and cut and rolled and fried and fried and fried. Inasmuch as you can simply inhale the first half dozen "rolls", she became far more familiar with her fry-pan that afternoon that anyone has need to be! They just wouldn't quit coming, and she couldn't quit cooking unit supplies were exhausted…and Vivian was exhausted!

In the driveway before the garage, Robert had constructed a "tripod" (or was it a tetrapod) to support the authentic, antique copper kettle….capacity about 30-35 gallons. He had scoured the kettle interior until it was a red-gold gleam. He had secured an apple butter paddle, complete with the corn shuck wrapping on the perforated paddle end. An enthusiastic fire had been built, and would be faithfully maintained, for the many hours the mixture would cook. Everyone would eventually came to share the wood smoke smell on their clothes. It was just a part of the ambiance, along with singed shins and seared hands for these continuously close to the fire. On hand were gallons of cider, pounds of butter, bushels of apples (awaiting paring and coring by the many helping hands", and lovely, arcane spices.

The roaring fire presently sent the cider off to a rolling boil, into which would presently be poured peck after peck of peeled apples. At first, they surprise you, since they were white and chunky. Given the time and heat, they lost their integrity, began to round on the edges, and in two hours or so, had turned to a hot, syrupy slush. You may check the recipe to see it, and how much, sugar went into the recipe. Some prefer it without, you know.

Due to the increasing concentration of sugars, the mixture boiled and foamed up alarmingly at times. Then it was that an entire pound of butter would be slipped into the kettle. I suppose the butterfat destroyed the surface tension of the bubbles, or something, and calmed it all down a bit. Well, it didn't hurt the taste any, either. When the spices—the cloves and cinnamon particularly, were mixed in, they would have momentarily alarmed the onlookers. But, considering the great quantity of the product…all that cider…all those apples…all that butter…it all came out rather nicely.

The hours of slow cooking went by. The children played about the yard and fascinating grounds. Conversation ebbed and flowed. Faces were flushed with the heat of the fire. An then, after much speculation, the kettle was lifted off the fire, CAREFULLY, **CAREFULLY**. The guests produced their modest cans and jars for their "share" of the ambrosia. The "fried bread and butter brigade" want to work, swiping clean the sides of the kettle.

Carefully, **carefully!** If you consider how much damage you can do with a single spilled cup of coffee…then consider the quantum leap of 5-10 **GALLONS** of more than 212° apple butter, spilled in your direction! No amateurs here, please…and no one with a "trick" knee either!

Now, then suppose you wanted to re-create it all. Well below are a pair of recipes that contain everything but the ambiance. Don't attempt these recipes unless you have plenty of time to invest, and not a little money either!

And, oh yes! Don't invite me either. I've already seen it as good as it gets!

The recipe will be given as I received it, but I have also then divided it in half, in one fifth, and in one tenth. And, immediately after first encountering this recipe, I was placed on a 1,000 calorie-per-day diet by my surgeon. He may have saved my life…certainly my figure!

Clayton Baker Family (Amish Quantity) Apple Butter

	2 x 2.5	1 x 2.5	1 x 1	1 x .5
Yield	140 quarts	70 quarts	28 quarts	14 quarts
Apple Cider	50 gallons	25 gallons	10 gallons	5 gallons
Apples (pared, cored & chopped)	11.2 bushels (40 gallons)	5.6 bushels (20 gallons)	2.4 bushels (8 gallons)	1.2 bushels (4 gallons)
Sugar	100 pounds	50 pounds	20 pounds	10 pounds
Cinnamon	15 ounces	7.5 ounces	3 ounces	1.5 ounces
Ground Cloves	8 3/4 ounces	4 3/8 ounces	1 3/4 ounces	7/8 ounces
Butter	4-5 pounds	2-3 pounds	1 pound	1 pound

(The butter is a calming agent, if and when the kettles boil too high. How much you use depends on how foamy your mixture becomes. It cannot hurt the flavor in such a quantity.)

Equipment: Two 35 gallon kettles, one 35 gallon kettle, and one or two cooking vessels larger than 5 gallons.

Very substantial "cranes" to suspend the kettles over the fire. The kettle, fully loaded with 70 quarts of apple butter, will weigh over 200 pounds.

One or two long handled apple butter stirring paddles, heads swaddled with clean, fresh corn shucks.

The Fried Bread Recipe

1 quart milk

¼ cup sugar

2 2/3 pkg. dry yeast, dissolved in warm water

½ cup lard

6 tsp. salt

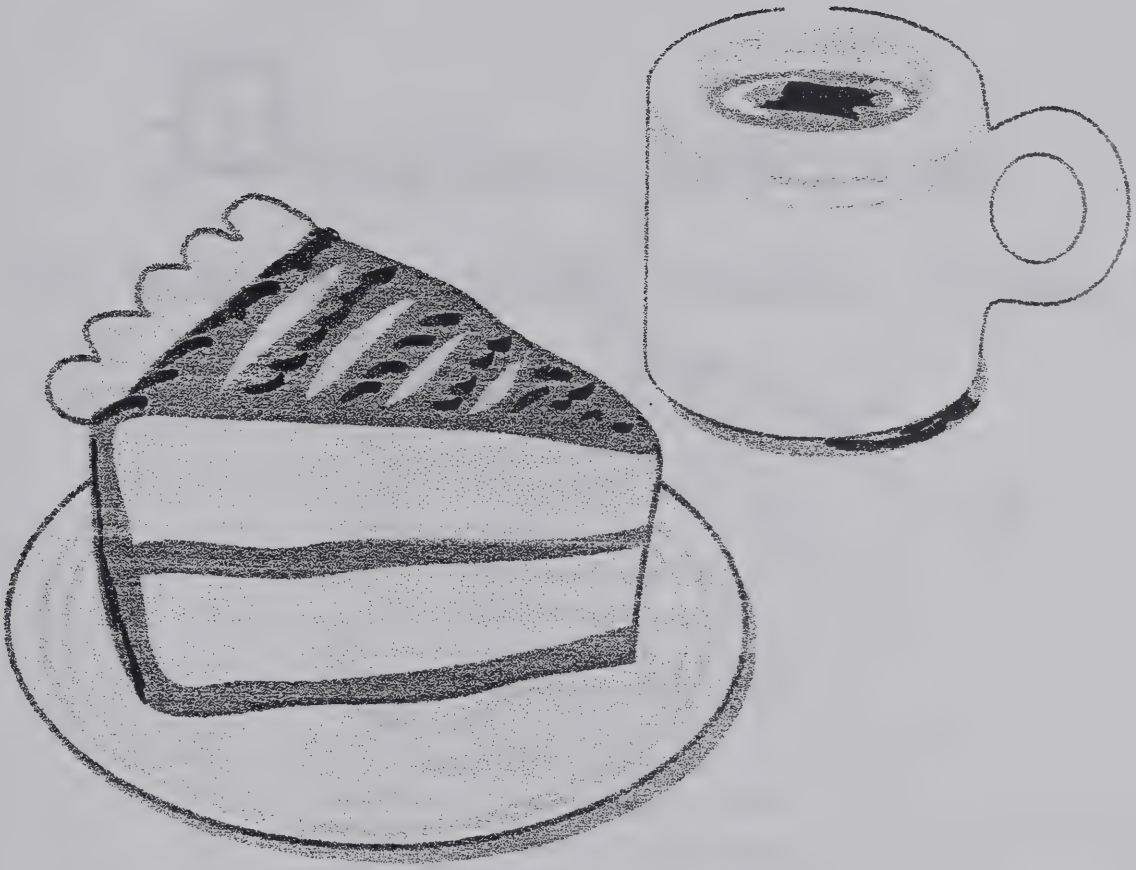
7-9 cups flour

Sufficient frying compound to deep fry 6 dozen pieces of fried bread

2 large electric frypans

Tongs or slotted spoon & draining facilities

The battle plan: add the yeast to the warm water. Then add the other ingredients and let the dough rise until doubled in bulk. Work the dough into biscuits (Mrs. Watts used 1 ½ " cut squares; Nashville House rolls them in the palms into ball shape.) Fry at slightly higher than 350°. The biscuits will have a better texture if they are not allowed to rise too high. Fry to a golden brown, turning once. Don't worry about leftovers; there won't be any! Your face will be pink with the heat of the frying and the warmth of the compliments. Enjoy…they surely will!



DESSERTS

Doughnuts in ? Rhyme

(in an awkward iambic trimeter rhythm) ?

No dactylic ? anapestic ?

One cup sugar, one cup milk
Two eggs, beaten fine as silk
Salt and nutmeg, a little will do
Of baking powder, teaspoons two
Stir the flour (?…none mentioned before!) lightly in
Roll on pie board, not too thin
Cut into diamonds, twists, and rings
Drop with care the doughy things
Into lard that briskly swells (?)
Evenly the spongy cells
Watch with care the time for turning
Fry them all just short of burning
Roll them in sugar and turn when cold
Warm them over when they are old.

Not much of a poem, but then, Shakespeare couldn't cook either!

Spice Cake
"The Best"

The author has referred, erroneously elsewhere, to this cake as "cost nothing", largely because he noted that his Mother used meat fryings, rather than butter, in the recipe. Well, at the cost of side pork for frying, butter would have been much cheaper! Sorry (not very) 'bout that!

A Big Spice Cake

Use 11" x 17" pan or halve recipe

2 eggs well-beaten

2 cups brown sugar

14 Tbls. meat fryings (or part butter, if you prefer. YES, that was 14 tablespoons!)

2 cups buttermilk

2 level tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. cinnamon

¼ tsp. allspice

¼ tsp. cloves

⅛ tsp. salt

1 cup raisins

"enough" flour to make medium stiff batter

Bake in 350° oven for 30 - 35 minutes. Test with toothpick. Don't overbake. Top with caramel icing. **Do not use any shortening with smoked meat fat in it!**

The Author's 2 cents: The original recipe came from the Dolph Family of South Bend, for whom Aunt Winnifred worked about 1905. Everything was "pinch and dab" then, hence the "enough" flour. Consider it a blessing that you got the 350°, let alone oven time and flour amounts! After all, "A good cook would just know, wouldn't they?"

Peach Cake

Mama was a pie baker, par excellence; but if the occasion demanded, she could turn out "something special" cakes: Peach, Lady Baltimore, and her celebrated "Cost Nothing" Spice Cake. (And hey! Her Boston Creme Pies were low-cost, high demand items also!)

Peach Cake

1 egg
1 ¼ cup brown sugar
½ cup butter
2 ½ cups crushed peaches (home canned & ragged were fine)
1 cup raisins or nuts
2 ½ cups flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. cinnamon
¼ tsp. cloves
5 Tbls. HOT peach juice, to be added last of all

No instructions as to sequence, save the peach juice, and…"Try in oven. Don't put too much flour in; just so it don't get waxy." Top with caramel icing. Oven Temperature & Baking Time? Mother didn't say when this recipe was first scribed off for the Betz Nursing Home Cookbook in 1987; but on being pressed, she offered: "Minutes"

True time and temperature: 350° for 35 minutes

The Banana Cake

In every book of recipes…in every file of food favorites… there will be a recipe that has been dog-eared, soaked with ancient shortening…fragile. It must have been a dandy to have had such repeated use and battering (pun intended). Written in my mother's handwriting, this recipe fell from an unknown source into my hands just as I was rounding the turn heading for the homestretch. Enjoy.

Cream one-half cup of butter and one cup of sugar

Beat in two eggs, one at a time. Beat well.

Add 1-2/3 cups of mashed bananas and ½ cup of sour cream

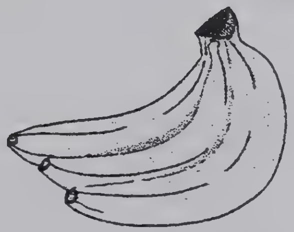
Sift together 2-1/4 cups flour, 1 tsp. Baking soda, 1 tsp. Baking powder.

Add to above mix and beat well.

Bake in two layers at 350° until golden brown

Cool 5 minutes. Put together with sea foam frosting

And for God's sake…SEND ME A PIECE!!!



Hickory Nut Cake

Divine ingredients may, in the hands of a gifted cook, produce divine results. One of the major contributors to this work can, by exercising a little magic with a box of cake mix AND one or two divine ingredients, produce a stunning hickory nut, or coconut cake.

But, it required constant careful control to be sure of your results. Her late husband, for example, was a dedicated and superior extractor of hickory nut meats. A cake of those meats was an unalloyed treat. But, on a single occasion, her brother-in-law (a gentleman of more casual approach to his duty and perhaps weaker eyesight, also) picked out the nutmeats for her. You'd be surprised…nay, devastated…by the pieces of shell that can hide among the nutmeats! The cake made with that batch of nutmeats was a dental adventure of some peril!

But what of the recipe for "from scratch" Hickory Nut Cake (which is what I was coming to anyhow)? Well, not in the least demeaning of the efforts of my collaborator, I offer Aunt Winnifred's recipe, circa 1910.

Hickory Nut Cake

Makes large cake

1 cup of nut meats
1 scant cup butter (3/4 cup is better)
2 cups sugar
1 cup milk
4 eggs
3 cups flour
2 tsp. baking powder

Cream the butter, then add the sugar. Add egg yolks. Alternately add milk and triple sifted flour. Add the nut meats. Add stiffly beaten egg whites last. Beat everything well, then bake in a 350° oven until a clean broomstraw comes out clean.

Hickory Nut Cake –*Revisited*

Not to take anything away from my co-author or his Aunt Winnifred,I feel I must step in here and take a stand. My mother-in-law is the cook mentioned in the previous article and while there are people who would like to accuse her of a lot of things, one thing they can't accuse her of is making her Hickory Nut Cake from a mix. While I don't eat a lot of it (my taste runs more toward fruit pies) I know the real thing when I see it. So here is her recipe (an old family recipe from Highland County, West Virginia). -BB

Hickory Nut Cake

Cream together:
1 3/4 cup sugar
2/3 cup butter
Add:
3 eggs
Mix well then add:
1 cup milk
3 cups flour
3 tsps. Baking powder
½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla
1 ½ cup nut meats

Bake in tube or bundt pan at 325° for 1 hour 15 mins.
Do Not Overbake

Sea Foam Icing

1 egg white (beaten stiff)
2 cups brown sugar (packed)
1 Tbl. White Karo®
½ cup water

Cook to soft ball stage: add to egg white. Beat until stiff enough to spread. If it becomes too stiff add a few drops of hot water.

Gertrude's Favorite Cake

This recipe has appeared so often in my mother's recipes that it must have been something special. She described it as, "The favorite cake I ever knew was Gertrude's Favorite Cake" (actually it is from a Calumet Baking Powder ®, circa 1912, I believe).

Gertrude's Favorite Cake

3 cups flour
½ tsp. salt
2 ½ tsp. baking powder
triple sifted together

¾ cup butter
1 ½ cup granulated sugar
creamed well together

¾ cup water
4 eggs
vanilla or lemon extract

Add one egg to the butter-sugar mix, beating well. Then add a little water, an egg, and a little sifted flour and beat well. Continue adding the water, egg, and flour alternately until all are gone. Then add vanilla.

Bake in two or three pans and join together with 7 minute frosting. Oven temperature—she didn't say in two different writings of this recipe. Try 350° until a broomstraw comes out clean.

A Missing Recipe

There is one dear soul who will have wondered, as I was gathering my portion of these recipes, "Why hasn't he asked me?" Not, I hope until she reads these lines will she know that I had not...could not have forgotten her fine cooking. And dear soul, it's not for cooking a chicken like a rubber football either!

It's your *F*R*U*I*T*C*A*K*E*!

Now…with most people, they can either take or leave fruitcake alone (and a large majority of those I know regard them as the gustatory equivalent of poison ivy and LEAVE THEM ALONE!) Indeed, one of our collaborators once found (in an infrequently used second fridge) a fruitcake that could clearly be identified as 20 years old. (Her husband had been bailiff for Judge Dale Myers of Fort Wayne, and as such, must have received it as a holiday gift.) Still wrapped in a protective cover, it had lain untouched for over two decades.

Palatable? As a laughable experiment, it was opened in the Holiday Season. The younger members of our group wouldn't risk it…more the fools they! I tried it, and I LIKED IT. It hadn't dried out over much during the terms of Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, or Bush. It certainly hadn't spoiled, ..not with such ingredients and protection. Fruitcake simply has ENDURANCE, Cousin **Freida**'s will additionally have ambrosial taste.

The ingredients:

6 eggs
½ c. butter
3 ½ c. flour
2/3 c. wine or pineapple juice
1 lb. candied pineapple
1 lb. almonds
2 tsp. vanilla
¼ tsp. salt

1 ¼ c. granulated sugar
½ c. dark Karo
1 ½ tsp. baking powder
1 lb. candied cherries
1 c. golden raisins
1 lb. pecan meats
2 tsp. cinnamon

Line baking pans with four layers of waxed paper, set pans in shallow water bath or bottom shelf and bake for 3 ½ hours at 300 degrees. Do not give to culinary Philistines. Think of the cost.

Mother Makes Mincemeat

(Reprinted from Auburn Reflections)

Not every year, but in frequent, fortunate years, Mother would make her mincemeat. It was a production calling for the skills of an army general, of a theatrical impresario, of a college cheerleader. It was, correspondingly, a moment of peril to the indolent and the modest. The results were more than a peril to the calorie conscious.

Autumn was the season, of necessity. The requisite apples would be cheap then, and in appealing variety. Fresh apple cider would be available. And, the proper mood would be upon the cook, for that is the ending of the canning season—that moment in life when the farm cook seems to think that everything animal, vegetable, and not eaten must be confined to green glass cans in the basement. Mother was a bonafide member of the group—indeed, had gone so far as to make sauerkraut on the back porch (before the EPA began to require an environmental impact statement from sauerkraut makers [Think that's quirky, do you! You haven't smelled sauerkraut in progress then!])

The affair began with the informing of her henchpersons that on a given date, she's appreciate of their help. Twice can I recall males being allowed to help, but mostly, it was women. Males might be allowed, however, to do menial chores—to bring the enamel canner up from the fruit room, to shop for ingredients (but only with the most explicit instructions, "Only puffed, seeded Muscat raisins would do. None of those suspicious seedless raisins.) The brown sugar must be medium brown, not light and not dark. We could go afield for the apples, but only if we carefully hewed to the instructions as to type.

On that given day, all ingredients assembled and Cousin Irene on hand as her favored helper, assembly on the batch began. Actual preparation had begun the night before with the boiling of eleven pounds of neck meat . We once made the product with boiled round of beef, but it wasn't quite the same. The meat was boiled in the enamel canner in about six or eight quarts of water, and then left to stand in the broth over night. In the morning, the meat was removed, and the broth saved, strained, and returned to the canner. The beef was passed through a coarse grinder and returned to the kettle to heat. To it was added the sacred ingredients—the puffed, seed Muscats, and the Zante currents, a witches brew of spices and "sauces"—tar-like apple cider jelly, apple cider, vinegar, brown sugar, cloves and cinnamon, and , remarkable, over-aged fruit from the basement, so long as it was basically firm fleshed and tart. Over-aged cherries worked just fine.

Peaches or pears did not. Plums had the flavor but perhaps not the consistency (I don't remember ever seeing them used, but their juice-yes.)

But notice please, no apples yet. They would cook-up rather quickly, and Mother held that you put in only half the quantity that you would eventually want in your mince-pie, and then put them in only soon enough before taking the brew from the heat that they would be cooked, but hopefully, yet firm. She wouldn't have used an expression like "al dente" but that's the state she hoped for in her apples.

Much tasting accompanied each subsequent addition. Perhaps a bit more of this, then that, then the other. Every batch of mincemeat came to have its own character, like vintage wines. They all start from the same ingredients, obtained the same place, but subtle differences did occur.

Finally, the apples were added, and the wine. Mother's experience with wines and brandies was limited. I got the impression that if it came in bottles and was free or cheap, it worked. If the wine was added to the hot mincemeat, none of the alcohol could have survived to be canned in. Of course, you could add the wine when you decanted the mincemeat into the pie shell, but in the heat of the oven, it had an equally short tenure. And, at the time of that baking, she preferred to add a large, firm-fleshed apple to bring the mix to the final balance.

The general, the impresario, the cheerleader? She marshaled and ordered her loving troops around imperiously getting things lined up to cook, she invested the process with the drama of a Broadway opening—no small production this; and she didn't hesitate to solicit your comment and compliments about the results. She was willing to proclaim this the best batch ever. She was a superb cook; she knew it; she expected your acknowledgment of it also.

Final step? Hot washed cans; put it in and seal it; no hot bath required—it kept as much as five years with no more than that. Use it only for special people and special occasions.

And, about two years from this October, let's have at it again.

20 Quart Mincemeat

A spellbinding recipe: Autumn, 1985—My mother makes her last batch of mincemeat, assisted by dear friend Beverly Snyder. It was canned, as usual, in a variety of glassing: instant coffee cans with 303 lids, pints, quarts; and some was frozen.

Christmas, 1994—My sister, Betty, bakes an excellent pie with the 1985 mincemeat, kept frozen for more than 9 years. At the risk of redundancy, I shall then begin by telling you that Mother's mincemeat had **Shelf Life!** (for I had eaten some of the canned product less than 3 months before!)

Mother's great grandchildren refused to even try the pie. More the fools, they! I had, eventually, 2/3's of it myself, and the warm memories of it's making!

The Ingredients:

6 pounds boiling beef, preferably neck meat
¼ pound suet
1 ½ cups cider vinegar
1 pint apple jelly (boiled down cider)
2 pounds raisins (PUFFED SEEDED MUSCAT)
2 pounds currants, ZANTE
3 pounds brown sugar
1 ½ gallons chopped apples (coarsely ground)
1 can crushed pineapple
1-2 cans old, tart, firm-fleshed canned fruit
1 quart prune plum juice, if available
2 tsp. cinnamon
½ tsp. allspice
¼ tsp. cloves
Quantity wine or brandy

Lately Discovered Jewels

Nosing through Mother's old, hand-written recipe book, I found three more recipes for pie fillings. Of them, I say in short, that even the angels do not eat this well!

FIRST, THE PIE CRUST

2 ¼ cups of flour
1 scant cup Crisco ®
dash of salt

Work together very well (to the large crumb stage). Add just enough cold water to stick it together. Put a floured board enough for one crust and roll out. NEVER PLAY WITH PIE DOUGH.

Custard / Cottage Cheese Pie

3 eggs
(2 Tbls. Cottage cheese, OPTIONAL)
lump butter (size of a shelled walnut)
4 Tbls. Granulated sugar
Beat the above ingredients well then add
2 cups sweet milk

Pour into pie crust and bake at 365° until a silver knife comes out clean. Put nutmeg on top (and I think, Before baking!)

Pumpkin Pie Recipe

1 large cup of good pumpkin
2 egg yolks
1 slim Tbls. Flour
¾ cup sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/3 tsp. allspice
¼ tsp. ginger
Mix the above ingredients well, and then add
1 ½ cups boiling milk

Beat your egg whites and fold in. Finally, fold in 2 Tbls. Browned butter. Bake about the same as a custard pie in a 365° oven.

Butterscotch Pie Filling

1 cup brown sugar
lump of butter, the size of a shelled walnut
Put these in a skillet and brown well
1 cup of water added, and boiled until lumps disappear
1 tsp. vanilla & a dash of salt added
Separately, mix:
2-3 egg yolks
1 Tbls. Flour
1+ cups of milk

Add the egg / flour / milk mixture to the hot syrup to thicken it, STIRRING CONSTANTLY. Pour all into a pre-baked crust, top with beaten egg meringue, and brown.
Let cool a bit before serving. It will ooze on you, otherwise.

A dear friend of Mother's recently expressed a wish for her blueberry pie recipe, but I'm sorry to add that she had no special for separate fruit pies. She did, however, follow some principles:

For apple pies, add several dabs of butter before putting a top crust on the pie.
For blueberry pies (or any other fruit i.e. elderberry that might have been a bit bland), add a teaspoonful of lemon juice to the filling.

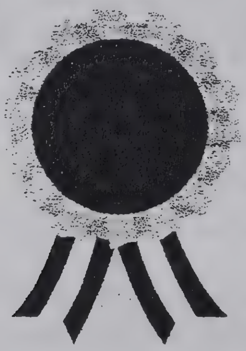
If the pie had a penchant for being overly juicy, add a tablespoonful of flour to the mix. She did not believe in tapioca thickeners (but I do!).

Any Fruit Pie Should Be Filled—Even Heaped Up.

Any Fruit Pie Must "Stew" (and in Mother's ovens, pies frequently ran over and messed the oven up a bit. A more provident cook would have lined the oven bottom with aluminum foil. Not Mother. The air occasionally turned blue with smoke after her pie baking.)

About the only pies I remember her "glazing" with milk or sugar were the apple & peach pies.

The lemon pie. Buy "Shariff's" (a Canadian brand) lemon pie filling. It is competitive with your best homemade fillings…and a lot less work. (Mother would never have recommended this, but I can and will.



The Sugar Cream Pie

My mother's fearsome reputation as a pie-baker did not rest on any one pie; she was almost "above compare" on any pie, be it two-crust-fruit, one-crust-fresh-fruit, meringue-topped-cream-fillings, or open fillings (pumpkin, sugar cream).

Hers were not pies that were complicated, nor were they generally time-consuming in their preparation. She baked against cooking deadlines in her restaurant experiences. She generally disdained Baroque recipes, with the possible exception of two or three cakes. So, if one had to pick a representative pie "recipe", I suppose that her Old Fashioned Sugar Cream would best fill the bill.
Her Instructions:

Sugar Cream Pie

"Into a 9" piepan, put a nice crust. Into this, put,

2 Tbls. flour
1 cup sugar

*Mix these with your **fingers**, not with a spoon or fork.*
YOU MUST NOT PERFORATE THE CRUST!!!

Then, pour in enough cream (half & half) until your crust is very full.
Mix all the ingredients together, again with your fingers.

Cut about 1 tsp. of butter into little pieces and dot the top of the mixture. Then sift a light dusting of cinnamon on the surface.

Bake at 350° to 375° until the top has browned slightly. Let it cool to "set" before serving. Do not attempt to cut it while hot; it will run badly.

Son's Note:

I have the feeling that she made that crust a bit "shorter" or rolled the crust a whisker thicker to forestall the filling soaking through the crust. This recipe was the aged cousin of other "cream" fillings, such as the "chess" pie, some of which relied on further ingredients such as eggs, corn syrup, buttermilk, and brown sugar to produce somewhat of a cross between a true custard and the sugar cream.

Mind you! Mama was not above tinkering with a dependable recipe when the spirit moved her. She forever lost the trust of a star border, who absolutely would not tolerate cottage cheese, when he learned that for years Mama had been "spiking" her custard pies with a tablespoon of fine cottage cheese, well mixed in. (It sort of took off that "overly-sweet" edge that some custard pies may have). He never ate custard again, for even if he COULDN'T taste it, he still wouldn't take a chance!

There is a touch of grudging justice in my nature that compels me to admit that there may have been variations of the above recipe that were worth the notice. Mother did not use the following, nor do I know the original "authors", but here follow two other formulations:

Brown Sugar Pie

2 ½ Tbls. flour
1 cup brown sugar
½ cup milk
½ cup cream
1 ½ tsp. nutmeg
2 tsp. butter

Mix well, then bake in 450° oven for 10-15 minutes; then finish at 350°
Let sit to firm-up and cool somewhat before serving.

Sugar Cream #2

1 cup white sugar
⅔ cup brown sugar
½ cup flour
½ tsp. salt
1 cup light cream
nutmeg
vanilla

Combine sugars, flour, and salt with 1 cup of boiling water. Stir well. Then add 1 cup light cream, ½ tsp. nutmeg, and ½ tsp. vanilla. Pour into 9" pie crust and bake at 450° for 10 minutes and then reduce heat to 350° for forty more minutes. Cool before cutting.

Pie Secrets (cont.)

While we are on the subject of pies, I thought I'd put in my two cents (or at least two more pies). These pies are two that we traditionally have on Thanksgiving. I think that Sweet Potato Pie has a much better flavor than the traditional pumpkin (apologies to my co-author's Mother). These recipes came to me from my friend Rick DeCamp and they came to him from various sources. --BB

Sweet Potato Pie

1 cup milk
1 cup sugar
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
2 eggs, slightly beaten
Mix together in a bowl
2 tsp. butter
2 cups cooked sweet potatoes (boil in skins, when soft, cool & remove skins)
Mash together butter and potatoes in a separate bowl, then add to mix

Pour into uncooked pie shell. Bake at 450° for 10 minutes, reduce heat to 350° and bake for 30-40 minutes.

Pecan Pie

1 cup white syrup
1 cup dark brown sugar

1/3 Tbls. salt
1/3 cup melted butter
1 tsp. vanilla
3 eggs beaten
Mix together and pour into 9" unbaked pie shell
1 cup (heaping) whole pecans
Sprinkle over mix

Bake at 350° in pre-heated oven. Bake approximately 45 minutes.

Prelude to a Stunning Cheesecake

In a bygone age, there lived at 205 W. 5th Street, Auburn, a lady of broad acceptance of the independent, the authoritative, the opinionated. Into that fascinating group I blundered one day, and I had the temerity to offer an opinion that Shapiro's Cafeteria held Indianapolis's title of "Best Cheesecake in the (My) World". I was rather quickly informed of my error by a visiting relative. She summarily dismissed my admiration for Shapiro's, (which I thought had taken over the mantle of perfection from Sam's Subway on N. Meridian). No, indeed…she cited a much better (and totally unknown to me) baker of her knowledge.

Being the absolute soul of amity and concord, *(cough!)* I let the matter drop. But, subsequently, I became acquainted with the B. Bartels Cheesecake…"Sin in a Springform Pan!"…and now I long to meet that…lady…again. I am prepared to drown amity, swamp concord, and put her in her place. Oh, bother me not that Barry is not in Indianapolis! Charitably granted, Indianapolis is in the world, and Barry's cheesecake will therefore be their best also.

The World's Best Cheesecake

I'm not usually the type to toot my own horn but since I'm one of the co-authors of this tome if I don't do it it probably won't get done. So, I now modestly present my recipe for the very best cheesecake that you have ever tasted (I have signed testimonials!) It's not exactly what you would consider low-cal and definitely not low cholesterol, but on the bright side, it's so rich you can't eat very much at one time. --BB

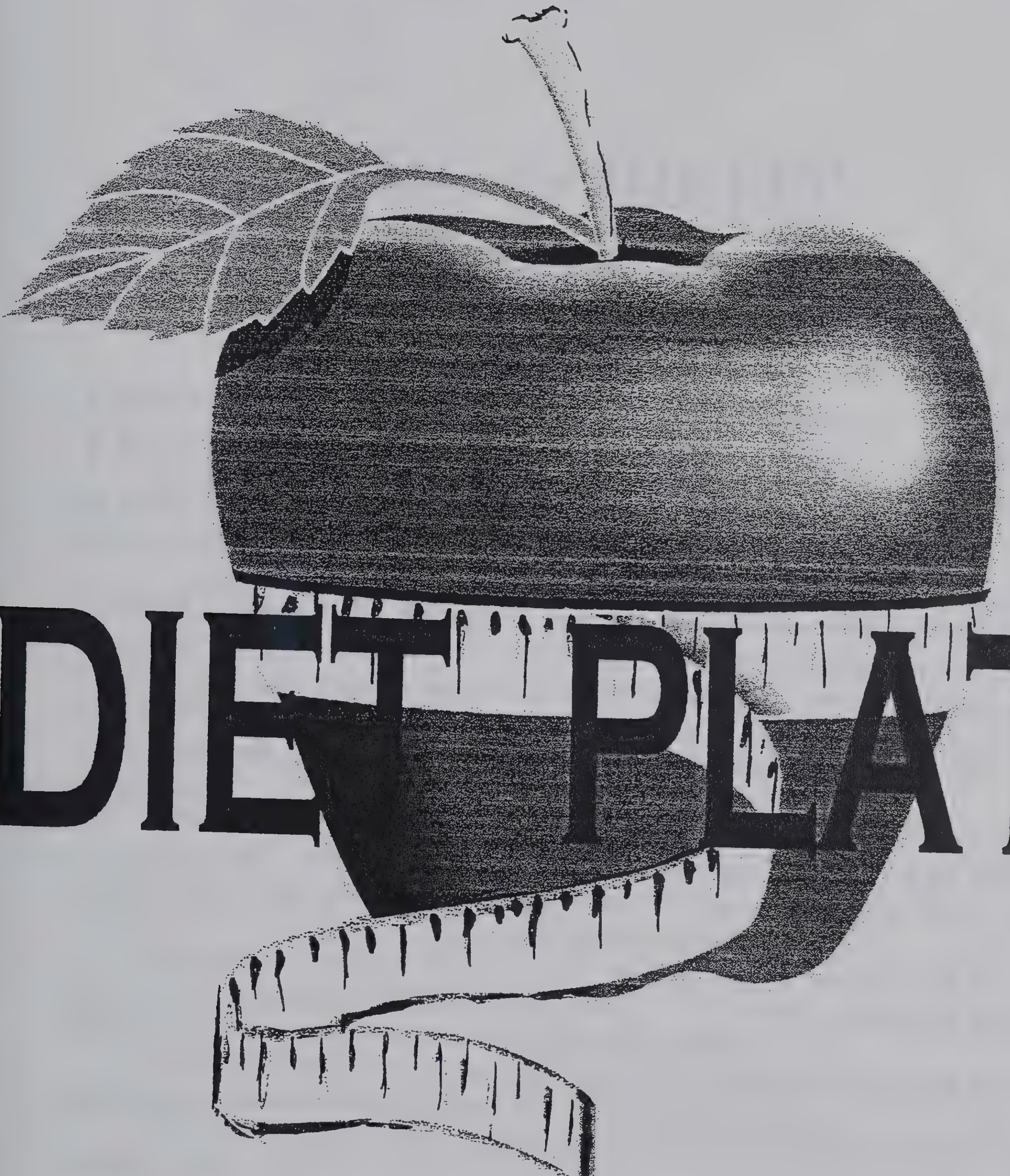
World's Best Cheesecake

Line the bottom of a 9 ½ x 3 inch springform pan with parchment paper (makes the cheesecake easier to unmold)

Crust:
14 zwieback wafers, crushed
½ cup butter, melted
½ cup sugar
Mix together and press into the bottom of springform pan and chill

Filling:
3 pounds cream cheese at room temperature
6 eggs
½ cup plus 1 Tbls. cake flour
2 ½ cups sugar
1 ½ cups whipping cream
1 tsp. vanilla
Juice of one lemon

Mix ingredients until smooth (one ingredient at a time) and pour into crust-lined pan. On the shelf below cake, place pan with one inch boiling water and bake at 350° for 1 hour or until cake begins to brown on top. Then leave cake in closed oven until cool. Chill cake before unmolding.



DIET PLATE

DO or DIE(T)!

I have recently enjoyed a catastrophic experience, and while it is a bit short on either sex or chicanery, I feel honor-bound to spring it on the world. I have again joined the American Mass…I am dieting…but with a difference. I AM going to succeed with this diet (as I never really have before). To some extent, all who diet bet their lives on it; and even more so, ME.

I began this diet out of a dire necessity. I had ballooned to over 400 pounds, had developed congestive heart failure, and was entertaining a cluster of varicose ulcers on an "edema-ed" ankle of Olympic proportion. And…I had something of a late-winter cold. But, other than that, I was in the pink (punk) of condition. I was actually bad enough off that I didn't realize that anything was seriously wrong. "After all, fat men are supposed to wheeze and pant, aren't they?" I had half kidded myself into believing that I was just "role-playing!"

When at last I dragged myself (almost literally) to a doctor, he didn't shilly-shally or mince words. "Hospital. NOW!" At that moment, it struck me as some sort of exciting mid-winter adventure, since he didn't mention "Congestive heart failure" or "varicose ulcers". Clever me, I had never tumbled, either!

Lying in the hospital bed next day, gazing back at one GP and one Surgical Specialist, things began to come a bit into focus. Dr. Richard Anningson would attend the heart problem; Dr. Norman Paul would treat the ulcers.

Dr. Paul, "We can try to cure your leg problem and send you back home, or we can also do something about the heart problem while you are here."?

Plucky Little Me, "Sure, why not?", but with no real perception of the real situation—yet!

Dr. Paul, "Well, then, we're going to run some of that water out of you, and we'll put you on a 1,000 calorie *D*I*E*T*." (Rumble of distant thunder?)

And so, it came to pass, that as I lay in my bed of pain (not really, but for the price of this book, you deserve a little drama/melodrama), they brought me my first 1,000 calorie diet meal. Off came the insulated cover, and there in the plate lay a bowl of oatmeal. Now…I am a connoisseur of oatmeals…oatmeal with butter, brown sugar, and half-and-half…all plenteously supplied: oatmeal cooked by my own recipe to end up tender, flaky, delightful. Children, we are NOT talking hospital oatmeal. One spoonful…ONE is all I needed to know that it was going to be a no-calorie breakfast, at least! I stifled a demand that they smear the backside of the cook with the oatmeal, stick her up on the kitchen wall thereby, and pelt her to death with stale toast. For, not realizing the diet was to start so very quickly, I had ordered breakfast the day before from a non-restricted menu and fantasized three strips or maybe six, of SALTY bacon, three eggs in a pool of BUTTER, and four slices of whole wheat toast, DRENCHED in butter. Then, a flotilla of Danish rolls! Egad!

And no, it wasn't the shock of being on a diet that had made me so sensitive to the missing cuisine. I had, after all, had a successful career of unsuccessful diets. After my weight had ballooned to 295 (from 202) in just 9 months of my first college year, I had dieted away 98 pounds in the summer of '52. I had always been able to shed 30 pounds over a summer—any summer. (And, sadly, I would gain back 40 pounds over the following summer!)

I had sometimes kidded myself into believing that I wasn't as large as every mirror told me. Oh, I knew when I began buying size 70 trousers, and 7-8X shirts, that I wasn't a lightweight. In the later years, I had gotten to loath buffet lines, inasmuch as my knees, (long since crippled by degenerative arthritis) made a trip through the line a point of misery . I had joked with my friends on the advantages of size. Whenever I came into a crowded room, there would always be an empty chair for me (even if it had been cleared only a split-second before I started to sit in it!.) I had given up walking any distance, refused to attend public events that involved stairs or fixed seating, and abandoned gardening and lawn care. But none of it had driven me to the diet that I needed.

My doctor? He doesn't nag. He has experienced weight himself, and I think that he knows that words alone will not change a patient's attitude. But, I had begun to tell myself that if, just if…someday…a doctor made a clear and convincing statement about my weight, I might try to do something about it. Nothing like varicose ulcers, CHF, and a hospital to focus the patient's attention on the need…and they did.

But, back to my "bed of pain". Hooked me up with a catheter (brought in a roto-rooter specialist), hooked me up to an IV stand, and began pumping diuretics into me. (My veins being buried in fat, it took probably a dozen (REALLY) holes in me to hook up two successive IVs. [and they didn't use a second one, at that!]) Well, Niagara poured! In three days on the IV and three days with oral diuretics, we said goodbye to 21,000 cc. of fluid! (10 ½ two liter bottles full) They were returning potassium to my system, and encouraging me to take fluid!, but the above 21,000 equals about 44 pounds! My skin, previously nearly taut and glossy, relaxed and wrinkled in a few strategic areas.

Remarkably, after the first "oatmeal fiasco", the hospital's meals were fairly good. Oh, to be sure, NO SALT, NO FAT, and NO SUGARS. But, they managed to find some very palatable alternatives. It was the first time in years that I had eaten baby beets, and they were ambrosial. The "Alpine Lace" cheese wasn't County Line (but then, neither is "County Line", anymore!) And very interestingly, a bedtime snack, and simple little vanilla wafers or graham crackers really can taste marvelous. "Just don't eat the whole damned box full, Hubert!" (self instruction)

I came home , after 6 days at DeKalb Memorial Hospital and some fine care, to find a young friend taking time off from his job as a respiratory therapist to look out for me and cushion my return. He in particular, and numerous other friends and fellow Lion members, were refreshingly helpful. As a 70 year old bachelor and the youngest of a septuagenarian family, you wonder, "Who will be there for me when I need them!" I got my heartwarming answer.

Well, Barry the Therapist can ALSO COOK, can he ever! He whipped up a low-cal batch of "Seashells Florentine" (pasta shells, non-fat cottage cheese, low-fat mozzarella , tomato sauce, spinach, and spices) large enough for a supper and 8 batches frozen for future use. I sniffed in derision at Fort Knox, knowing what I had in my fridge.

And, in a subsequent visit from his wife, I learned the existence of low fat or no fat cottage cheese, cheese slices, sour cream, cream cheese, and spaghetti sauce, (but Friends, read them thar' labels to check the amount of sodium! [I found buttermilk great for taking pulls, but Mercy! The SODIUM!])

HUMOROUS INTERLUDE

"I wasn't living off the fat of the land. I WAS the FAT of the LAND!"

" This weight isn't my fault. It's hereditary. After all, I weighed 137 pounds at birth!"

And there was this funny scene, in 1969, in the Hitachi Kimono Shop in the Tokyo Hilton basement arcade, when the elderly Japanese seamstress measured me for a tailor-made hoppi coat and a yukata (summer bathrobe). She was pretty close to Oriental profanity, I'm sure.

"He's big enough to have two zip codes."

But oddly enough…over the years, almost no one joked with me about my size.

NON-HUMEROUS INTERLUDE

Does it take "will power" to diet successfully? Well, maybe so, but I've found that some honest self-disdain/dislike/loathing may go a bit further. In introspective moments, I came to admit to myself that I felt trapped in a prison of fat, however delightfully achieved. I have a well enough developed sense of style/taste that I envied the slim the things they could wear—colors and patterns that NEVER occurred in a fat man's wardrobe. I hated the awkwardness, the increased difficulty of keeping my body clean. This fat man was not basically a happy fat man; I faked an ebullience I rarely felt.

I read as well as any, and I believe a reasonable portion of the medical world's pronouncements. I could continue to think of myself as a fortunate exception, but I also knew that I could die quite a bit sooner if I were not the exception to the rule. My knees told me that I was not an exception. By January of '95, my heart and my ankles were also telling me that…if I had been astute enough to read my own body.

AND NOW…SECRETS, I SAY **SECRETS** OF MY SUCCESSFUL DIETING

1. Imagination: So you've got to abandon those lovely, two-slices-of-bread sandwiches. So what? Take a loaf of good rye bread, let slices of it largely dry out. Then build a sandwich of fat-free bologna (chicken breast, if you insist), a generous leaf of lettuce, a light touch of a creamy horseradish sauce, a slice of hard bread, the horseradish sauce again, the lettuce again, and finish with the bologna/chicken (it'll be much easier to pick up with the bologna!) So it looks odd. So what…your table habits likely aren't ever going to get you booked on the Orpheum Circuit, anyhow. The sandwich isn't THAT awkward to eat, and it is suprisingly filling and tasty. Alternative "fillings" can include low fat cheeses, onion slices (The author is an onion freak…and a garlic junkie), cucumber slices, tomato…as long as your additions are filling and LOW CAL.
2. Portion control! It doesn't do you any good to eat low calorie foods if you don't also control the quantity. You got as large as you did from overeating…not just high calorie eating. In fact, it would be a shock to many people to know how many unattractive foods were eaten to get fat…foods eaten in boredom or inattention. If you've been used to eating like a thresher, the sight of ½ cup of anything is one big letdown. Tough! So is dying young!
3. Food has frequently been a principal source of satisfaction to you. It must be moderated…possibly replaced by some other satisfaction. Get yourself a good tape measure and a professional , "Doctor's office" scale. Have yourself measured and mercilessly weighed, as you begin the diet. Then, don't jump on that scale every ten minutes to see if you've lost another ounce (rather hard to do, this!) Your doctor will, of course, know that you are on a diet…You'd never have gone on one without consulting him first, would you! Report to the doctor your progress to him (for it will help when your will power sags a bit). It helps to have someone else ALSO checking on your progress. In those moments when you quaver, it's sometimes enough to say to yourself, "But what will my doctor say?
4. As you begin to shed the inches/pounds, try on the clothes that were comfy for you in your fatness. The 2"-4"-6"-8" gap that cap develop at the waistband is a powerful reward for your discipline. And then, try slipping on something that was simply too small for your before. Another shot in the arm as you suddenly find something new (relatively) that doesn't cost you an arm and a leg at the local tent factory. And, relish the compliments you begin receiving about your progress, including…eventually. the richest of all: that they don't seem to trust you quite so implicitly in the presence of their husband/wife!…and, when you sit in a chair in your doctor's office, it's not quite so affectionate. You find that there's more room under the steering wheel of the family car. And…your rolls of fat, formerly as taut as a cantaloupe, now begin to loosen up and jiggle like the gallons of sugar free gelatin desserts you've been eating. And then, suddenly, it's up and out of a chair without thinking of how your knees are going to hurt; it's up flights of stairs that formerly were about as welcome as, let's say, a 1,000 calorie diet!

You are swinging the doors open, the doors of your prison of fat. You may very well be adding years to your life, and improving their quality also. It IS worth the effort!

Sadly, there are some things that you are going to say a tearful goodbye to, or at least take a long furlough from...most of the cuisine meats...the steaks, well marbled or not; most pork dishes, almost all gravies, watermelon (I pause to weep!) any fruit not canned in its natural juices (and then, in careful moderation); almost all nutmeats (Did you know that a cup of peanut halves come in at 875 calories? Outrageous!) Say goodbye to whole milk, full-cal soft drinks, virtually every snack food (for LO! Our friend, the potato chip has 10-15 calories per chip [and no one eats just one chip]...and the sodium! Gasp!) And cinnamon rolls! (Joe Hardy, in Damn Yankees . Sold his soul to become a good long ball hitter for the Washington Senators. My soul would be in mortal danger if the Devil offered to make cinnamon rolls non-fattening!)

And breads, bagels, English muffins, and hard rolls, and tender baking powder biscuits...you get the nauseating idea!

French fries, and fried chicken, and hamburgers. Now, now, what do YOU think!

Oh, hey! It isn't that you must give all the foregoing forever, but when the pressure becomes unbearable and you allow yourself a blow-out meal, you can try ONE of the above, AND IN MODERATION. You must remember that your stomach has sat there under your ribs for years, functioning as a never-failing, never-in-error adding machine, toting up every calorie. It's still working that way, and an overdone blow-out meal may take several days of strenuous dieting to overcome. But perhaps at every 10 pounds. or 25 pounds lost, one treat.

And summertime and good old all American ice cream? Read the labels, and shop carefully. There are some very low-cal brands...some no-fat yogurts (but keep an eye or the sodium and the calorie count, even if it touts the low-fat angle. Recall that most sundaes are in the 375 calorie range, and the revered banana split come in at a horrendous 1,165 gut-busting, diet-ravaging calories.

But, it's summer, and it's fresh string bean season, and beet season, and various lettuces season, and cucumber season. And, if it's zucchini season or you want to risk sautéed zucchini and onions, T-fal it or Pam it, or use a minimum of olive oil. Stir it a bit more often, and perk it up with herbs, rather than the overload of salt I ...... adore.

Back to that "imagination" bit, given in #1. Boredom is a real problem on your diet. Well, if friends give you useful suggestions...use them!. Look the cookbooks and the TV cooking programs over for ideas. Try some of the exotics, as long as you can control the calories. Seafood, but steamed or baked without the rich sauces are pleasant (But if you open a can of tuna (water packed) or salmon, a whole can for one meal is at least twice what a 1,000 calorie diet will allow!)

Keep a record of what you've eaten. After 6 months, I had forgotten some good diet combos from the first days. Check in with your doctor often. He cares and you need your vital signs monitored carefully. Buy something you'd like to wear, but 2 sizes too small. Then set a goal of shrinking into it in 3-6-9-12 weeks! Try to be modest in the face of the compliments you will be receiving, but remember that if you backslide, you will have made fools of all of those nice people who had faith in you.

Pasta Shells Florentine

Pasta Shells Florentine

1 sm. can sliced mushrooms *coarsely chopped*
½ chopped onion
½ tsp. minced garlic
1 tsp. Italian seasoning
¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
2 Tbls. fat-free chicken broth
1 16 oz. container fat-free cottage cheese
1 pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed & drained
½ cup egg substitute
24 jumbo shell macaroni, cooked and drained
1 jar light spaghetti sauce
2 cups fat-free grated mozzarella cheese
2 Tbls. fat-free Parmesan cheese

Cook mushrooms, onion, garlic, Italian seasoning, and pepper in chicken broth until tender. Remove from heat and stir in cottage cheese, parmesan cheese, spinach and egg substitute. Spoon into the shells. Prepare glass baking dish by spraying with non stick spray and then spread ½ cup of the spaghetti sauce. Arrange the shells in the dish and then top with a layer of the grated mozzarella. Then pour on the rest of the sauce and top with the remaining mozzarella. Bake at 350° for 35 minutes.

LET US CUSTOMIZE YOUR COOKBOOK!!

For an additional charge,
we can give it that

***Well-Worn, Hard-worked
L*****O*****O*****K !!!***

We can:

***Spot it with grease, cooking oil, or butter (your choice)

***Dog-ear selected pages, subtly letting readers know your favorite recipes (if they care!)

***Sprinkle flour artfully about it

***Write recipe CORRECTIONS in with #2 pencil, or common eyebrow pencil, if you prefer

***Scent the book with:
A. imitation vanilla extract
B. cheap Cuban rum
C. onion or garlic juice
D. Old Grandad

Note: The above modifications can be had CHEEEEEEEEPLY, giving your copy ***R*E*A*L***C*O*F*F*E*E***T*A*B*L*E***
I**M**P**A**C**T
(yeah!)

Inquirez-vous of the auteurs......................................

SON OF...

REFLECTIONS

Hubert L. Stackhouse

© 1996 Hubert L. Stackhouse
First American Edition

Design and Composition By:
Reflections Press
4306 Sherman Blvd.
Fort Wayne, IN 46808

Printed By:
Butler Printing Co.
100 N. Broadway
Butler, IN 46721

A DEDICATION

(Once in a while, you sort of have "to sneak dawn past the rooster". Hence, this Dedication cannot be printed in the same typeface as the remainder of the book. Sorry 'bout that!)

◦ ◦

I don't have children of my own, nor do I well-tolerate those of others. But, I do have a welcome, sort-of "intellectual son", and to him do I **DEDICATE** this jewel of flippancy:

"SON of REFLECTION"!

For, to him, would I:

1. Give my **brass bed** (but much later, thank you!)
2. Allow **RARE** snitches of my "Smalto" cologne!
3. Concede him to be the **#2 Trivial Pursuit Player** of this area!
4. Say a heartfelt **"THANKS"** for many kindnesses.
5. **Offer the SINGLE and ONLY dedication of any of my works!**

So there, **BARRY BARTELS,** you see what comes of associating with the right/wrong sort of people!

12-3-96

The Usual "Pre-Good Stuff" Stuff

In re: **Forewords...**like in golf, "Get out of the Way, Stupid?

In re: **Introductions...**like, "This is my daughter. She's homlier than a mud fence, but we need to get her married off!"?

In re: **Prefaces...**like, in the morning, that's what you see in the mirror before take your make-up kit and "restore the ruins"?

In re: **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS!!:** (This I know!) It's when you "Thank" La Belle Waander again...**again...and AGAIN** for sustaining your operation.

It's when you "Thank" **Craig Taylor** for the original Great Idea (of writing a series of articles).

It's when you "Thank" your **Patient, Supportive Audience** who keep buying the books.

And, it's when you "Thank" **Janet Hamilton:** and then **doubly, triply, BARRY BARTELS** for the many hours spent, hunched over a keyboard, trying to discipline these scattered ramblings! If this work has a visual grace...**it's Barry who "dunnit".**

(And just be glad I didn't get around to a Glossary, Index, or Appendix! ['ja wanna' see my scar, a la L.B.J?])

12-2-96

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ALL I SAID WAS... 1
THE LADY (?) AND THE BILLINGSGATE 4
THE FOODS OF MY CHILDHOOD 6
WHY I WRITE FUNNY 11
IN WHICH I PUT MY MONEY WHERE MY MOUTH IS 15
SHADES OF THE LONERGAN JUNK YARD 18
COUSIN BEA AND THE IMMACULATE CONTRAPTION 21
ON EMULATING J. P. MARQUAND 24
MY LIFE AMONG THE ELITE (OR WHATEVER!) 28
ON THE LAND —1910 31
REFLECTIONS ON A LADY DOCTOR 42
WITH A LITTLE BIT OF HELP FROM MY FRIENDS 45
AND JUST A LITTLE OFF THE TOP 50
JONES-Y REVISITED 54
"COWED" BY IT ALL 56
"SEVENTEENTH SUMMER" TIMES FOUR 59
HANK AND THE REMARKABLE SALVE 65
ON BEING A THOUROUGHLY ROTTEN CADDIE 69
A MOMENT OF MARTHA 73
FURTHER ASPECTS OF RESTAURANTEURING 76
ON COLORFUL RELATIVES 87
CHRISTMAS AS I KNEW IT 91
TAKING MAMA TO DINNER 96
SO...HUMOR ME PLEASE 102
HUMOR ME—PART TWO 110
AN OLD CODGER REVISITED 114
A BIRTHDAY HAPPENING 117
L'INTERLUDE POETIQUE 120
A HOOSIER LOOKS AT HICKSVILLE 122
LAYERS AND LAYERS OF NONSENSE 126
MY HOUSE BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD 129

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONT)

MAMA'S ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT 133

HOW DO I LOVE/LOATHE THEE? 138

THE WHISTLING WIRES 142

VARIATIONS ON A MEDICAL THEME 146

PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHILE PUNISHING A WAYWARD LAWN 149

I'LL BET YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME 151

ALL I SAID WAS...

This business of being an "expert" is odd, to say the most (I never say anything the "least", you may have noted!) All I said was....(Talking to Le Grande Journalistic Poo-bah of the Hicksville Tribune)......**"Hain't God bin' good to Indianny!"** (certainly not very original). in re: the way our waterways flow in this area. For ....

Consider N.E. Indiana's penchant for "imported" disasters, flood-style. First, we have.....Fish Creek, "outletting" Hamilton lake and recently in flood, flowing over into Ohio to join the **south-western flowing** St. Joe of the Maumee (as distinguished from St. Joseph of the Lake, flowing north-westerly, sorta, through Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties and emptying into Lake Michigan [Guess why they named South Bend "South Bend!"] Well, then, the romantic old St. Joe flows as though headed for a respectable end in the Wabash River system of Indiana...passing through such eminence's as Newville (where my father nearly drowned in it, c. 1912, while working on a new bridge); Orange, scene of the Kinkaid Mill and the celebrated "dog-rescues-drowning-tot" vignette; on to St. Joe, where my mother and her father fished, c. 1905, in a CLEAN river; further on to Spencerville, one of the first settlements in the county; then through Leo and on - on - on to the Three Rivers Filtration Plant in Ft. Wayne. But, at Ft. Wayne, it commits a watery heresy; and, after joining with the **north-westerly flowing** St. Mary's River to become the Mighty Maumee, **makes a nearly 180 degree reversal and FLOWS TOWARD LAKE ERIE!** , to eventually empty

> ... "expert". Oh, no! I'd guess I'm rather more a literary and geographical name-dropper!

into the Atlantic Ocean, via the St. Lawrence River system.

Well, that was a bit useful in our pre-settlement days when a relatively brief portage allowed you to go from the St. Lawrence system to the Wabash-Ohio-Mississippi system. The French...the fur traders, courier de bois, voyageurs, et al, did use it so and coveted it in the 18th century.

And, the waterways dictated the early development of the area. When Houlton entered upon the territory, he came up the St. Joe and Fish Creek to the general area of Hamilton to found the first "settlement". When Spencerville and Orange and Auburn were founded, all were placed on "working water" locations suitable to water-powered mills. At Orange and Spencerville, banks were high enough to allow dams and mill races that kept the danger of floods to a minimum...**but they must have had 'em from time to time..(but there were forests a-plenty and prairies to slow-down and "meter-off" heavy rainfalls).**

Auburn was a sad, expensive exception...eventually. Wesley Park could have found ground almost 15' higher, **one-half mile in any direction,** according to the late Mayor Jerry Oren. But, Wesley elected the working water, set the town in a swampy swale, and "bought" big dollar drainage problems for the town. The Mayor was quite pointed (!) in rejecting my proposal, made many years ago, to erect a statue to our town founder... and just for that reason.

Well, anyhow....so the St. Joe brings us water from Michigan and Ohio, and St. Mary's brings up water from Ohio, and they **do contribute** to flooding conditions in Ft. Wayne every spring or so. Oh, 'tis true...lots of the water comes from drainage in Indiana's NE corner; but none the less, much of those floods are run out-of-state.

Well..............when the fine young reporter from the Hicksville Tribune came knocking on my phone (and then my door), I **properly acknowledged** that I'm NOT, repeat, **NOT** an expert on waterways...just an observer. I rambled onward about the "gift of the glaciers", leaving us the beds of sand and gravel, that so aided early "infrastructuring" of the area. I rambled onward about early canal efforts in the general area...about such vignettes in Richter's celebrated "Trees-Fields-Town" Trilogy, about Adams' Erie Canal-set works, and the Gronauer Lock problem of New Haven and Allen County.

And then the reporter toyed with calling me an "expert". Oh, no! I'd guess I'm rather more a literary and geographical name-dropper! So there!

Future name dropping?

1. Clamming on the St. Joe River
2. Thar' She Flows!, (on Dredging Cedar Creek--already in print)
3. A Quaint, Ecumenical Vignette of the Flood of '83

THE LADY(?) AND THE BILLINGSGATE

There are those moments of exasperation in life when words...at least those of polite society...fail you; and you are driven to short, Anglo-Saxon, guttural, abundantly profane expressions. I suppose we shouldn't do so, but if you are driving a rusted, "superannuated" van, and if the sucker won't start for you in the Scott's parking lot...then the pressure may be just too great to endure. And so it was!

The van was as described above, but with the added factor that the driver had parked it in a space for the handicapped. Well, let me tell you, Buster.....whatever the handicap was, it did not affect the agility of the driver, who ricocheted from the driver's seat to the "under-the-hood" area with truly enviable speed...AND REPEATEDLY! **And the handicap did not extend to the driver's "profanity gland...**SHE could express herself with a forceful (about "force 10", in hurricane terms) if limited vocabulary. During the two or three minutes that it took me to unload

my shopping cart into my trunk, she used at least four dramatic, sometimes sexually explicit insults to the situation and the balky motor...expressions that I'd blush to use (Yes, that I **HAVE used and blushed at...BUT IN PRIVATE).** She knew I was there; she certainly did not give any indication that this was an inhibiting factor. Verbally, BOMBS AWAY! ! !

> . . . the pressure may just be too great to endure. And so it was!

The motor ignored her, and when I left the parking lot, it was still refusing to start. I am sure that motor had the better of not only the driver, but the rest of us: WE could hardly ignore her!

Another day I must go back and see if the van is gone.....and are there any scorch marks on the pavement?

THE FOODS OF MY CHILDHOOD

November, 1995. While awaiting the publication of my most recent work, "A Fatuous Cookbook" ("Fat-to-Us"?), I came across the notes made for another article, one that logically should have been included in that collection of recipes and opinions. It was a walk down memory lane (really, through Memory's Pantry), reviewing foods as I remembered them from 60 years ago....and with the help of friends, further back than that.

Where to begin? Some location that dramatizes the great strength of that age: **almost no prepared foods.** When you went into Mike Lumm's Grocery (on Jackson Street, just south of the present Post Office, you went for ingredients, not box mixes. True, there would be lovely deep boxes (about 14" X 14" x 14"), filled with "store-bought" crackers, or sugar wafers, or sandwich cookies).. Of course, you can still get these, but now they are packaged in disciplined dozens and cellophane, and they can never have quite the aroma or freshness of a newly opened box in Mike's. If one of the clerks (I do remember Marion Peckhart working there in the early

In season, you had your home-grown veggies that differed radically from those of today, inasmuch as **they had FLAVOR!**

30's) bagged them for you, I do NOT remember any dainty plastic gloves to satisfy the demands of the Board of Health. Marion was a neat man; and after all, you could trust your stomach to deal with an occasional bacterium, anyhow.

On the end of the counter, a wire basket with fresh country eggs, to be "brown-bagged" and carried home with delicacy. On that same counter, a round of County Line cheese, tasting like it never can again. With it, a huge, machete-type knife and **A FREE SAMPLE** to help you make up your mind! Sometimes, in some stores, a glass dome over the cheese...especially in fly-time. (And many stores had gooey adhesive fly strips hung discretely to cut down the buzzing pests.)

Yes, a few things were boxed, but interestingly, they were kept on tall shelves BEHIND the counters. The clerks would use an elongated "gripper" to pull them from the shelves as demanded, often catching them in one hand while working the device with the other.

On the ends of the counters, sometimes barrels containing flour, sugar, staples...to be ladled into brown 1#, 2# and 5# bags as the customer requested (flour, sometimes in 25 or 50 pound weights, and in a very heavy paper or cloth bag). The latter was for several generations the basis of everyday, home-made clothing.

The prudent householder went shopping with an iron-clad list, not susceptible to impulse shopping so slyly built into the design and display of current supermarkets. But.......there would usually be room for a small bag of chocolate drops or horehound candies (and indeed the latter made a very effective cough drop, now didn't it?).

To a selected clientele, Mike or Hebel's or other established grocers would and did extend credit, to be settled on Saturday (payday) night.

"WAIT! WAIT! WAIT! Where are the green groceries...the leafy green-and-yellow veggies we so desperately need...our daily fix of beta-carotene and all?" **Well, backward boy, you had a garden, now didn't you?** In season, you had your home-grown veggies that differed radically from those of today, inasmuch as **they had FLAVOR!** True, no celery for 11 months a year...short seasons at best of strawberries, raspberries, peaches. True, no South American grapes "out-of-season". (Indeed, given an open purse, there is no longer any such concept as "out-of-season", just "out of money"!)

The veggies that did carry us through the winters were not flown in from Jamaica or Chile or Chihuahua. They were in the basement in glass jars, put there by mother in the season of plenty. They were in a storage bin in the basement, holding potatoes, onions, the marvelous-but-grotesque Hubbard squash and its cousins...and the apples. California produce hadn't yet been lured onto the market by fast freights and uncounted millions of Eastern dollars paying for a mindless waste of Western water. Oh, maybe a few Sunkist navels at Christmas time; maybe a few Arizona lemons now and then....but despite the dearth of these, we somehow survived. Y'know? You can make a vinegar pie that rivals a lemon pie!

In addition to the splendid service given by Mike's (and they did deliver orders!), there were a surprising number of "Mom-'n-Pop" operated corner groceries....Marvin Shaw's at 20th and VanBuren....Hamman's at 9th and Indiana....Palmer's "Little Dutch" on North Street....and three times that many not mentioned. Small enterprise flourished; a cold newsboy could drop in on a bitter Sunday morning to get warmed up, and Tony Lemish drove to Toledo in very early morning to get special produce for HIS customers. And....you knew the proprietor by name and by service.

And, in the early 30's....store-bought bread? Not yet, I think. You went to Baker's Bakery for the like. Cabbage and potatoes and onions....you COULD drive into the country to Troyers or others to buy in bulk. Apples? Leichty's and Widney's in St. Joe were a pleasant drive away.

I'm not the scholar to know when the larger, and LARGER, super-market at last arrived on the scene. Such significant social movements are almost always missed by we "ivory-tower" types. I'm glad I missed the moment....something special was lost, and we shall not ever regain it, I am sorry to say.

And then, just when you think you've had an effective-if-not-"last word", you mention your article to a dear, very-mature cousin, and she adds some priceless reminiscences of her youth: the other store in downtown Auburn with the be-wigged proprietor who sneezed one day and flipped his toupee into a barrel of sugar to the vast amusement of onlooking children and thereafter, everyone they could relate the event to! The standard oiled-wood floors, cleanly swept several times a day, that would so inflame a modern fire inspector!

The stores were, of a fact, a place of charm to children. The bouquet of smells that greeted you....the spices, the pickles, the cookies and crackers and cheese and the stick candies and...and...and. **And,** the kindly (and commercially astute) proprietor could be counted on for a free hand-out of a hard candy, a horehound "kiss", a bonafide jawbreaker!

And have I spoken of the ambiance? More than just the enchanting odors, more than the oiled floors, more than the bulk staples...the lighting and the ventilation were part of it. Of, to be sure, some sort of heating for chilly months, perhaps the classic "pot-bellied" stove in the middle or rear of the store. In summer, perhaps the milling ceiling fans, not really cooling the air at all but giving the effect by keeping the air slowly turning. and the lighting? Not the cold neon, the cold fluorescent...no, let it be warm, dim (relatively) incandescents or even further back, kerosene lamps...or...even gaslight? Surprisingly, although they did not emulate our modern 24-hour-a-day markets, they did keep other-than-modern-business hours...earlier in the morning, later at night, and Saturdays 'till 9:00 or 10:00 PM. But, **no Sundays!** Blue laws did prevail, if not on the books, then in the heart.

WHY I WRITE FUNNY

As I lay in bed, preparing for this "talk" (Yes, dear friends, two things I must assert: that I do prepare somewhat for these occasions, and: that I do some of my best planning while lying in bed. So there, the secrets are out!).... well, as I lay there planning, the idea struck me that perhaps you'd be interested in knowing how I got to be the way that I am.

I digress: Consider the economy of the above: If no inspiration comes to me in the supine position, I can easily drift into a nap...a reward for the elderly in itself.

Well, anyhow....I do write..handwriting-wise, "funny", and it's no accident! Ages and ages ago, when I was young, a consortium of JayCees used to host a New Year's Eve party: Harold "Hank" Carper, Don Albert Rice, Marion Webb, and I...some of us aided and abetted by wives.

. . .There's enough going on in this world that is at once grim. To a lot that life offers, you can either "lump it" and laugh, or weepingly sink under it all.

We were longer on energy and wit than on money, and we sort of extemporized on arrangements. I contributed meagerly of the money and somewhat more generously of the wit. I did the invitations....some in rather questionable taste. Once, an invitation printed on bathroom tissue, in a rather suggestive color of ink. Once, each invitation was cut into irregular pieces before being mailed, requiring you to assemble your own. And, once, I reasoned correctly that I could learn the peculiar style of Jeffersonian handwriting used in the Declaration of Independence. So, I more-or-less mastered it, wrote a master copy for Marion's printer to "burn into a plate" and print on brown butcher paper, saturated each invitation in paraffin, ironed ach with a hot iron, rolled and charred the edges of each, and mailed 'em. It looked pretty much like an ancient document, frayed around the edges by age. Our guests deciphered it and came in hungry and thirsty droves. And, I remembered the technique.

So........when the public showed a flattering taste for my writings, to the extent that I was asked to sign them...personalize them...and since my sister-in-law had given me a calligraphic pen set for a Christmas present, I put it all together and began throwing some pretty wild signatures.

An added bonus: sometimes I take notes on public presentations of other speakers. If the speaker is a "low-bridge"...in some fashion offends my taste, to the point that I wish to remember it...I write my notes in Thomas Jefferson's handwriting, and am thereby free of the embarrassment that could occur if someone read my less-than-flattering commentary. If the speaker is **TERRIBLE,** I will farther write the notes in Spanish and Jefferson, **and even I can't read that!**

◆

But, "Why do I write funny funny: in the humorous vein/vane/vain?" Well, dear friends:

There's enough going on in this world that is at once grim. To a lot that life offers, you can either "lump it" and laugh, or weepingly sink under it all.

You can sometimes make your point with humor where serious discourse would lose your audience at once. Sort of Mary Poppin-esque, "A Spoonful of Sugar Makes the Political Poll Go Down."

There's a definite audience for the fluff of life, more so than for the stuff of life!. I am pleased to tell you that there are more than two dozen groups that I have had the pleasure of performing for, AND I ENJOY IT. Why else do you suppose I have my fees where they are? **And, to be sure, it helps the stuff sell.** (Rotary-2; Friends of Library; Heimach Center-2; Out-of-town Lions Ladies programs-2; Ft. Wayne Jewish Federation; DeKalb Historical Society; Noble County Women's Democrats; Entre Nous and Auburn Author's Day-2).

There's an inexhaustible supply of material: When I got to enjoying writing...and the recognition it brings...I assumed that there was no end of the historical material to be mined. But, after nearly 90 articles, I can see that I'm in danger of working over the old "mine trailings". But, to paraphrase Sir Christopher Wren's epitaph, "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice"..to wit, "If you seek (his) monument, look around you." Well, friends, if you look at our world for ten minutes, something ridiculous is going to happen. Given the modern world of politics...the world of entertainment...both worlds where they take themselves far to seriously...they'll be doing something preposterous just any minute now. To wit: a comic strip commentary on the withdrawal of candidates from the

primaries, due to lack of funds: "If they can't spend money when they don't have it, they don't belong in Washington anyhow!..and..."That man is trying to buy the nomination with his own money, whereas we're trying to buy it with yours!"...a sort of "flip of the bird" to fedeal election funds.

Inexhaustible...like the classic fable of the mill that ground salt endlessly, making the oceans to become salty. "The mills of the (political) gods grind slowly, but exceedingly funny."

So...don't slam the lid of my coffin too quickly. I may not be done writing, even then.

IN WHICH I PUT MY MONEY WHERE MY MOUTH IS!!!

The most impressive political speech (?) I ever heard was delivered, oddly, by a very young man...a Secretary of State of Oklahoma, who was all of 29 years old at the time. Oklahoma had just tried a radical experiment...it had elected officials who were intent on doing just what they had promised. They were, as it were, true political radicals; for they had said that they would truly dry Oklahoma up unless the state abolished its hypocritical prohibition stance. Sounds odd? Well, it was then said that Oklahoma would vote "dry" as long as it could stagger to the polls, and accordingly, bootlegging flourished. Came the youth movement, and the State Police were ordered to ENFORCE the law.

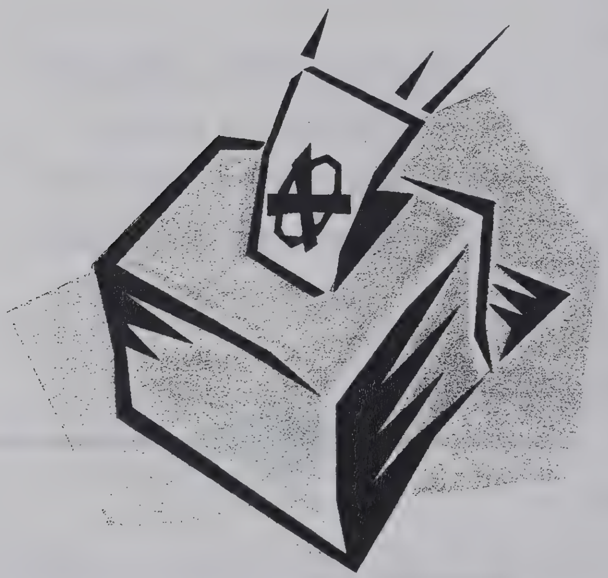
Given the notoriety this action engendered, it was little wonder that members of "Boys' State", as they whimsically identified themselves, were much in demand as speakers. Said Secretary of State was booked to appear at an Indiana JayCees Governmental Affairs School, held in the Severin Hotel in Indianapolis sometime in the late '50's. Well, now, the speaker was truly a sensation. He

◆

> . . . corrupt politics...proceed exactly from a voting populace...or perhaps more likely from a populace that doesn't vote

◆

played a massive joke on his audience by appearing to forget punch lines from three consecutive jokes, later to remember them with tremendous effect. His audience vastly enjoyed being "suckered in" by his ruse. His effect was probably enhanced by the presence on each table of two bottles of complimentary wine...(not Oklahoma wine, I should think.)



He also included a dazzling, if improbably joke, about an Oklahoma Quaker (?), an ill-natured cow, and some Methodists.

And then, he reminded us...with tremendous effect...of the basic truth of political life...the basic truth that we so easily forget; to wit: **YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR IN POLITICS ! ! !** He brought the truth home again and again that corrupt politics...if that is your belief...proceed exactly from a voting populace...or perhaps more likely from a populace that doesn't vote...a populace that did **not** encourage good candidates to seek office, did **not** support good men when they did seek office...and probable **never** got directly into the fray themselves. They stood back, lamented the lack of talent and honesty in politics, and whined about corruption. **"If this is your situation, THEN IT IS YOU YOURSELF WHO IS CORRUPT!"** "You have gotten what you have paid for, deservedly!"

Well, now...we were a group of community activists, and much disposed to accept his message. We would go home, and hopefully apply what we had heard. I did go home, and to a modest degree, I tried. I accepted an occasionally supportive role with a political party steadily drifting and polarizing. I found less and less comfort in a traditional political polarity, and I vigorously began voting for the candidate, rather than his party. I didn't make party loyalists feel much happier, and at last, I abandoned/was abandoned by party politics. But, I DO support a good candidate now and then...writing for at least three of them, stuffing envelopes, making posters and charts, and **giving money** now and then.

I suppose it would make a sizzling wind-up to this piece to cite some otherwise corruptible individual that I had personally prevented from taking office...or some good man who might have never developed his political gifts at all, were it not for me. Nothing so dramatic, I'm sad to say. But, **...BUT,** I've tried to honor that young man's admonition. I give of my time, my talent, and my money, and **I NEVER FAIL TO VOTE MY CONVICTIONS,** that my politicians will have fewer convictions on their records, also.

SHADES OF THE LONERGAN JUNK YARD

The richest portion of my childhood was spent in the Depression, and it didn't hurt at all! (For after all...what every child wants is to be like the "Joneses", and they were poor too!) It was not an age of commonly-granted allowances for kids; when you absolutely NEEDED some money, there were a few ways to get it. It was the age of the returnable milk and/or pop bottle (usually for 2 cents each), and Lonergan's Junk Yard. Not "salvage"; not "re-cycling", thank you; just JUNK! (Oh, to be sure, there were other junk yards in operation [but as far away as Auburn Junction], but our focus of operation was on Van Buren Street between 2nd and 3rd Streets--later the G. M. Reno residence, and subsequently, the Nazarene Parsonage.

And what did we collect, haul laboriously, and sell to Mr. Lonergan? We collected old newspapers, simply (?). Well, not so simply, since a much smaller percentage of homes subscribed to the Star/Courier/Dispatch and/or the Journal/Sentinel. So....you scrounged up papers wherever you

could....politely inquired of the neighbor's papers....and slowly accumulated the necessary poundage. The junkyard minimally...and I MEAN minimally...paid for your papers tied in some sort of bundle and delivered to the yard by your own or a borrowed coaster wagon. Never can I recall getting more than a dime for all we had accumulated at one moment...but, you could do a lot with a dime then. The papers were weighed, and then thrown onto a nondescript pile of no rhyme or reason. Eventually, they would be put in the massive baling machine and compacted into huge bundles, to then disappear from our sight forever. Rags were also collected and sold, and I think all must have one day reappeared in re-cycled paper products. Scrp metals were a less likely collection for us, but more rewarding...if you found any at all. The alleys and trash heaps were our theater of operations; and the resulting collection was also surrendered to Lonergan, but for better returns than papers. It would be cast into appropriate piles in the yard, to later be collected in trucks and shipped away...most of it. Most of it, that is, BUT NOT ALL!

It was the age of the returnable milk and/or pop bottle ... and Lonergan's Junk Yard

When my sister and brother-in-law built on the Lonergan lots in the late '40's, they banked their foundation in excavated earth. More earth was hauled in, including some good fill dirt, to grade the lot. Somewhat later, my brother-in-law decided to have a garden close to the alley behind the house. One would have assumed there to be enough fill dirt and "native" top dirt under that to make a garden. But, when one had the land plowed, the share went through the "cosmetic" layers and unearthed a treasure-trove of rusty iron, the legacy of the junkyard. No one will ever do any excavation in the back yard of that property without receiving plenteous reminders of its past.

That resultant garden grew well enough; plantings of fruit trees survived to fruition, although we always sort of wondered if their quirkiness was the result of the iron-rich soil, or that my brother-in-law (a consummate "deal maker" on the road) had been bamboozled by some nurseryman. A "Red Delicious" tree might bear "Grimes Goldens", and an "Italian Prune Plum" might bear "Damson Plums"!

On the south edge of the lot (the former "front" entrance of the lot), there was no mistaking the product, unfortunately. They were talked into planting thorny locust trees, a nauseous choice for a residence with children. The locusts prospered; their thorns were of Olympic proportion. Those were trees to conjure with! I close by wondering what the course of the human race would have been if the apple in the Garden of Eden had grown on a thorny locust. At least the snake would have gotten what was coming to him!

COUSIN BEA AND THE IMMACULATE CONTRAPTION

My mother was a very young "youngest child", being 18, 16, and 9 years the junior of her siblings. When she had play friends of her own age, they were the likes of Niece Irene (daughter of the 18-year older brother), and Cousin Bea of Hicksville (a bit her junior, but forceful enough to hold her own in any relationship!)

As they grew up, married, founded families of their own...they remained as close as sisters might have. (Oh, mother DID get along warily with her two older sisters, but they were divided by distance, age, and religion...cordial, but not chummy!) Bea, on the other hand, was someone you could love fiercely, quirks, "warts and bumps", and all!

Among other accomplishments of mother that Bea admired and honored, was that of being a good cook. Not that Bea herself wasn't a good cook; she certainly was, but we all like a meal away from home now and then. Very much appreciated was mother's pie-baking skills, and mother often took a pie with her when she visited Bea there on Edgerton Street in Hicksville.

> . . . the unfortunate woman who equates an immaculate house with a good marriage and subsequently "cleans her husband right out of her life!"

BUT...but...on bristly Cousin Bea's conditions!

Cousin Bea had a fetish about cleanliness. Had she not had other winning qualities, she might literally have been like "Craig's Wife" in the play, the unfortunate woman who equates an immaculate house with a good marriage and subsequently "cleans her husband right out of her life!" There was lots of bric-a-brac in Bea's home...too much furniture...too many painfully starched little doilies under just everything (it seemed)...**and all immaculately kept, dusted, cleaned...** for as long as Bea could do her own work. Fortunately, Cousin Bea's husband, Seth ("Si"), was a precise worker (tools and dies), and could endure the "Murphy's-Oil-Soap Ambiance".

So, we would go a'visitin' Si and Bea, taking our **pre-baked** pie with us. Now, it WOULD have been more convenient to make it there, or to take an un-baked pie with us and bake it in her oven. But, mother's formula for good fruit-filled pie called for one-hour in the oven, and **the pie must stew (almost invariably bubble up through the crust AND DRIP ONTO THE OVEN!)** "But...so easy," you cry. "why not put a sheet of aluminum foil on the bottom of the oven to catch the drips." ...or something? Well, I don't really know why she didn't. Maybe it was because her church felt aluminum was poisonous (particularly in cooking), for they actively discourage its use. Who knows? But, for whatever reason, mother had to bake (and "contaminate" in the oven at home, and then we took the hot pie, suitable swaddled, with us. **Really...TOTAL *M*I*C*K*E*Y *M*O*U*S*E*,** kitchen-wise!

But, Bea was Bea, and you loved her as she was.

Sad end! Bea grew old. Si, who meant to care for her, died first. No one could satisfy her, although many domestics were tried. She ended in a nursing home that reeked of incontinence...far from the fastidiousness that so characterized her life and housekeeping.

Mother also grew old, and eventually could not do her own baking. But, for as long as she lived...and for sometime thereafter...there was/is no aluminum foil in the oven. If the air turns blue (from oven smoke), who cares anyhow. I'll just dedicate it to Mother.

◆

ON EMULATING J.P. MARQUAND, OR ON WEARING WEALTH COMFORTABLY

In a bygone age, when I was young and athletic (touch of fantasy there!), I was employed for a summer by Auburn (Pre-Greenhurst) Country Club. The President that summer was Fisher C. West, a gentleman of ordinary athletic talent **but** superb powers of concentration (said combination made him the finest of local bowlers and a consistent, productive golfer....and a slow, exasperatingly, fine bridge player!). Fisher called to my attention a literary work that, in a sense, mirrored a charming situation in the history of local recreation/golf/tennis--the parallel between John P. Marquand's Life at Happy Knoll and early financial practices of local benefactors, Bill Willenaur and B. O. Fink.

> . . . But I can tell you that I admire the grace and tranquility with which they still seem to wear their fortunes.

The latter two gentlemen are the core of this article...their demeanor...the ease with which they wore their considerable wealth. But, more of that later.....

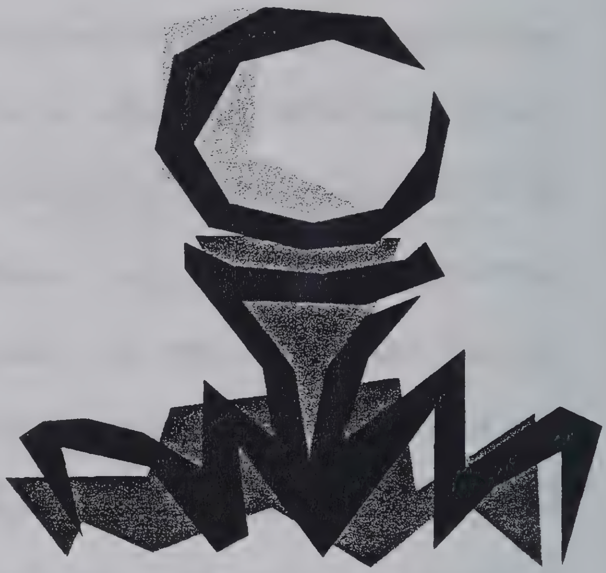
In Marquand's novel, Happy Knoll was the country club and the two protagonists were a pair of wealthy gentlemen--one, president of the board. The entire "Happy Knoll" work was the series of letters that they exchanged about club operation, the central theme being "Why we didn't break even this year, and "We would appreciate your annual generosity (a check), as we have in years past' " The work was infused with a gently humor, along with a "chamber-of-horrors" on what could/did go wrong at Bibi's Birthday Bash or Mimi's Madcap Wedding or the like, including the six golf carts in the swimming pool and the regrettable loss of the caterer's van...and...and...! Well, then, as a result of such Scottish calamity (for what else should it be called at a country club?), the wealthy benefactor...and perhaps more than one of them...was asked to generously help balance the books. **And while no known catastrophes attended Auburn Country Club, Fisher informed me that the early years of local golfdom saw Bill and B. O. doing exactly the same thing. When there was a deficit, they kept the operation afloat with their personal generosities!** Perhaps those who golfed...those who tennised...knew of their benefaction; perhaps not. From the very, very limited contact that I ever had with the two Gentlemen (and they **DO** deserve a capital "G", indeed!), I'd guess that they eschewed any publicity or thanks for their kindness.

And, as I have said, Fisher was charmed before, as I was, after his telling me of it.

Similarly, I have been pleased for many years by what I choose to interpret as the good manners of the monied in Auburn. I was sensitive, **but not haunted, (Thank you!)** to the differences in wealth in Auburn. I envied those kids in school who actually **had an allowance.** What luxury! Then, as I grew older, I met some of the adults of money...usually through the fact that they bowled. (Oh, to be sure, I knew of them through my days as "The World's Worst Caddie" at the country Club...but rarely did anyone ever caddie for them, least of all me.) Bill Willenaur seemingly eschewed his wealth by playing his rounds with a single, multiply-adjustable club. I do not remember B. O. taking a caddie, although it's quite possible he did...just no small Stackhouses.

As I became conscious of real wealth (I was probably 26 or 27 when I did, really!), I expressed an opinion to the late Mayor Jerry Oren about the number of bonafide millionaires in Auburn. "Two or three", was my opinion. **"Try a dozen, or more,"** was the Mayor's correction. And then...and then...the fact dawned on me that wealth in Auburn was not expressed as it sometimes is in the movies (later in television?). It was not ostentatious, superior, aloof. **It was comfortable, "go-to-work-everyday".** Mayor Oren said that a goodly part of it had been founded when locals had the acumen to buy stock in the fledgling Lincoln Life Insurance company and then share in its growing prosperity. True, several local fortunes were based on thriving local industries...the Foundry, Rieke's...but I was far more charmed by the quiet little lady on South Jackson Street who had done it the Lincoln way.

I could not now say who has the wealth and who has not...well, I **can** give you one of the "nots". But I can tell you that I admire the grace and tranquility with which they still seem to wear their fortunes. Occasionally, I hear that they go to Palm Springs or the like, but with so many whom I know going to Florida or Texas or Arizona for the win-



ter...or retirement, the Palm Springs contingent do not stand out very prominently.

A final consideration: If...**if...IF** I had the wealth, would I wear it as well as they? (Not that I'm likely to ever find out!) Since I'll never have to put that to a test, I can equivocally (**not "unequivocally"!**) say that I **would** either get the radio fixed in my 10-year-old Cadillac, or get a new Lincoln Town Car with a functioning radio---probably at the same cost! A little more money in the bank, a little more to give to a favored cause or two. Rare wines and expensive viands? Hardly, for I am marooned on a 1,000 calorie diet for another year, yet, and **must** elect a changed pattern of consumption after that. Wardrobe? At 71, who's to care what I wear? No, I think not. You seem to tempt Fate sometimes when you seek too much. What do I want with a $10,000 funeral? Now really...............!

MY LIFE AMONG THE ELITE (OR WHATEVER!)

Life has not afforded me very many chances to rub elbows with the high and mighty of our world, and I flatter myself (perhaps) that I have not made an utter fool of myself courting the rich and famous, but.........................

At least once, and for a prolonged period, I had a sort of back-alley relationship with the "400", or whatever Auburn's version of might have been called. Oh, to be sure, I caddied on the same Country Club patronized by the North Main Street crowd, but that's not really much like sharing. No, I mean the Auburn Hotel...the cuisine.

Only farm kids "brown bagged" it—an action we townies disdained.

My mother had been hired, in the summer of 1930, to be 1st cook of the Auburn Hotel. To be sure, that was not the premier kitchen position, that being held by an imported Hungarian Chef. But, in matters Cuisine Americaine, Mama was the honcho. As a part of her employment "contract" with owner, A. D. Faust (much more likely with kindly old Dr. L. N. Geisinger, a silent partner), Mama was to be permitted to give me lunch each school day. (It should be understood that lunch was from 11:45 to 1:00PM, and every town kid walked home to lunch. Only farm kids "brown bagged" it---an action we townies disdained. [We had a marvelous capacity for stupidity and prejudice in those days, and we exercised it fully!]

I left my classroom in the Harrison building...and the classes of Misses Dobrick (She who PADDLED me once!), Miss Hawk (a lovely creature who married a Showalter and gave up teaching...a tragic waste, in my juvenile opinion), and Miss Elizabeth Guild (whom fortune did not allow to read this work, as she recently passed...these 63 years later!).....Well, anyhow, I left their classrooms and made my way to the kitchen on the west end of the Hotel building. I was tucked away in some quiet corner, and presently Mama would bring me lunch. I think it likely to have been some lesser costly items from the menu, the owner, A. D. Foust, being Olympic-quality tight/frugal/cheap.

During that lunch hour, I made timid and casual contact with such luminaries of the staff as Old Tom (Logsdon?), the custodian/engineer; Mary Reasoner, a dishwasher and assistant cook, Dorothy Dannenberg-Cutter, a peppery waitress-chamber maid, the Hungarian chef, and very rarely Mr. Foust or his stately/haughty wife (who had possibly forgotten that she and Mr. Foust began their careers as bell hop and chamber maid in a hotel themselves.) I think that if Mr. Foust paid me any attention at all, it was probably to check on what I had been given for lunch.

Well, anyhow...............for three years, and possibly in excess of 500 days, I ate the same cooking as Ames, Cord, Faulkner, Little...name your luminaries of the Auburn Auto Company! I am sure that their doings, and those of others of the "Silk Stocking Row" were discussed/gossiped about. What a book I could have written, if only that staff had talked a bit louder...or I had possessed enough experience to understand what I heard!

Odd footnote: I had an older brother and two older sisters. I haven't the foggiest notion where or what they ate for those three years. They may have fasted, for all I can remember (Doesn't seem too likely, does it?)

However it came about, it all ended in 1933 when Mother, in pique over Mr. Foust's "economizing" (by cutting her wages **yet again,** "Walked on him". She was at home briefly, and then began cooking at the Auburn Diner, a much more free, more generous setting. "Dad" Louis Shuman would likely have welcomed me in his kitchen-under-the-Diner, but by then I think that I had become more tolerated by my siblings (one had graduated and gone to work full-time). My brother would graduate in '35, and my remaining sister was probably forced to endure me for lunch. Whatever the case, dinner with/close by the High and Mighty became a fading memory. By the late '30's, Auburn Auto was defunct and the Hotel Dining Room became a lame accessory to a dying hotel. Not too many tears were shed when the presumptuous successor to the Swinford House closed its doors.

ON THE LAND -- 1910

When my Grandfather, Albert Stackhouse (1863-1918), began farming (c.1885), his profession dominated the demographics. More than half of all Americans still lived on the farm. But...the effects of the Industrial Revolution in America were taking a relentless toll of that population base, with a corresponding effect on family size (no longer a need for 8-10-12 children for a labor force) and a regrettable loss of distinctively rural values. Bert Stackhouse's children would mirror that shift: at the time of their deaths (1950-70), all of them were "townspeople", and only one even worked at anything related to farming. The home farm was no longer in family hands, and the status of having been a successful livestock farmer (one), or an unsuccessful tenant farmer (my father), were just memories.

> More than half of all Americans still lived on the farm. But...the effects of the Industrial Revolution in America were taking a relentless toll of that population base

But the date chosen? It was the year, my father a farm boy, reached his 17th birthday. He was within a year of traditional graduation age, but after an unpleasant six grades of schooling, he had dropped out...not that anyone really thought he needed a formal education to farm, anyhow! But.....also.....1910 was safely in the Pre-WWI

Era. Mechanization of the farm was limited to such as the reaper, the stationary threshing separator, the silage chopper, and the hay-rake. No tractors to speak of...no combines...no "no till" planting (unless you wanted to be certified "LAZY"!, no "flivvers" or "pick-ups".

Father was raised, from shortly after his birth in 1893, on a farm at 8041 CR 60...just on the Ohio Line. His painful schoolhouse was about a true mile west of that location, for the little good it ever did him. The farm was 80 acres, adequate but not generous; and it would not accommodate three grown sons and a daughter, when married. When Grandfather died (apoplexy) in 1918, Grandmother had to let the middle son, Uncle "Slick" and his "Heiress", run the farm. Whether through mismanagement or hard times, the farm was gone by the early '30's; and Grandmother ended her days, living with and baby-sitting for her daughter in Hicksville.

The oldest son...he of the livestock (sheep) venture...had married well...a daughter of a prominent land owner in Fairfield Township. My father married (at 21) a girl (late 16's), and was forced to seek a living first as a section hand on the B&O, and then 8 or 9 years of tenant farming in Concord and Wilmington Townships. No real capital...borrowed money and credit...predatory landlords (He was once evicted AFTER putting in the season's crops...to allow the owner's son to qualify for an draft exemption in WWI. Lawsuit. Lost.)...and two disastrous wet autumns (finally put him "near bankruptcy" and made a city slicker of him...and me [12 weeks old at the time!])

But...I have digressed (shock, dismay, surprise? Only if you are unfamiliar with my style.)

What was farming like in 1910? Well, if you want to cut to the end and avoid another 1,500 words, **just think "AMISH".** For, barring a couple of pieces of the earliest mechanized/powered equipment, farming then was much as the Amish are now...save the social pressure of the "English" world wasn't there. (Faithful readers WILL slog on!)

Every farm was, to some extent, different, yet all shared one thing: the need for massive amounts of labor. Families tended to be large because they needed to be...and even the education of those children was tailored to accommodate the needs of the growing season. In my first teaching assignment, we were let out for the summer on April 15th...an acknowledgment of former days to farming. And, having a heavy Amish component in our school, we understood that there would be many and prolonged absences during corn-picking in November. Though there was much fascinating about the Amish, seeing 14-year-old girls with chapped...even bleeding hands...from picking corn by hand, **AND WITHOUT GLOVES,** rather dulled any misguided admiration I might have had for the Amish!

And, seeing the tears rolling down the cheeks of Katie Bontrager, as on the eve of her 15th birthday, she came to say "Good-bye" to us, her teachers...well, I lost my admiration for the Amish, and I lost my best English student! Forty-seven years later, it still stings. (End of Digression #2)

Another common feature...HORSE POWER! Draft horses, most often of mixed breeding, and driving horses (whose looks, breeding, and performance sometimes mirrored our present-day preoccupation with automobiles.) (But, I wonder...did everyone have to have a Morgan then, as the world has now gone "ape" over the pick-up truck and the van?)

Those horses! Frederick Lewis Allen, a fabled chronicler of early 20th Century life, said that if you could be transported back to 1900, that would have been your first observation ["But look at all the horses!"]. Your second, charmingly, would have been, "Look at those skirts!"

Horses, to command you to grow timothy, alfalfa, clover...and to command large areas of your farm for pasture. To be sure, cattle and sheep also could utilize the pasture areas. Horses to command hitching posts on all sides of the Court Square in Auburn, and before every business that cared for the farm "custom". Stables (not less that 7 in Auburn), and blacksmiths (at least 3 well-known ones) according to my Grand Source, Silas Teddy Walters.

And such wonderful "amendment" to your garden...to the fields of your farm...as a by-product of this equi-culture!

(Digression #?)...My late friend, Russell "Doc" Guinther, noted that the use of draft horses did not die out as quickly or as totally as one might suspect. Doc noted that in many large cities, draft horses were still in use to pull one-horse carts in alleyways too narrow for motorized vehicles. So there!

Horses...that could, in many circumstances, be "programmed"...to bring you home from a late nite date, you sleeping and Dobbin clopping...that could learn a milk-route (in town, of course) so well that a new milkman could learn much of the route by where the horse chose to stop (See Thornton Wilder's play, "Our Town".)...that pretty much knew the routine of plowing or wagon pulling or what-not, so that they took a minimum of direction. And, horses that could reproduce themselves (Try, oh just try, getting your John Deere to do that!) And, there could be an affectionate bond between man and animal that let the declining years be spent "out to pasture", rather than "off to the 'knackers' (British for a slaughterhouse/ dog food manufacturer...ugh!")

. . .And what was life like for
Grandma, on the farm, in 1910?
She, a woman of 45, was doing
all of the housework herself...

But...it WAS a two-hour trip from Grandpa's to the County Seat; it was an 18-hour trip from Grandpa's to Uncle Nuell Smith's at Coldwater...with a walking start to let the horses get limbered up, a "turn down" at every stream to let them drink and blow, dinner and supper on the road (of Grandma's heavy slabs of bread with heavy slabs of meat, and wedges of Aunt Bessie's pies). (When Father and Grandfather came to town for the wedding license in 1914, they came from St. Joe by train, it being January and horses being slow.) And if the danger of run-aways existed still, they did not match the carnage of our present-day highway deaths.

One further "horse-observation"...roads were dirt or gravel, and rather more forgiving to Dobbin's hooves than asphalt or concrete. Not until Old State road 427, Waterloo to Auburn, was paved with concrete in 1917 (from CR 36 to Jefferson Street in Auburn)...by Peter Shingledecker and Silas Teddy Walters...did the horse have to be shod for such hard surfaces.

And what was life like for Grandma, on the farm, in 1910? She, a woman of 45, was doing all of the housework herself, her daughter, Bessie, having now married. Cooking (no great reputation here, thank you!) She was a bad butter maker, for a fact. My father always preferred preserves (having been made ill on rancid butter as a child!). Washing, ironing, darning, sewing for at least two sons and her husband...it must have kept her busy. When the fateful passing of Grandfather came in 1918, she had to choose between the two younger sons as to which would manage the farm...Father, Mother, and two children...or Uncle Slick and his Heiress. She chose the latter; she chose sooooo wrongly (the heiress could **NOT** cook worth a hoot, and additionally, hated her mother-in-law.) By 1930, the results were in; the farm had failed and had to be sold; Uncle Slick and the Heiress were living in one of the properties in Hicksville that she had inherited from her mother, and getting on venomously with her other sister-in-law (not my mother.) (Poor Uncle Slick was also becoming a local legend in the annals of cuckoldery!) (Notice how smoothly this can glide into digression!) [Oh well...<be hung for a sheep as well as a lamb>...Fate plays grisly tricks.] On the day that their divorce suit was first heard, Aunt "Heiress" was under a bit of strain: her latest paramour **was being buried** that same day. Uncle Slick relented, they ended their marital marathon together, and upon his death, she discovered that he had named the hated sister-in-law as a replacement beneficiary on his insurance, **and that she would not pay over the proceeds...AT FIRST.** Then she DID make sure that ALL of them would be used for the funeral and the marker. I do not know if she finally allowed both names on the marker.)

(And, what is the Olympic record for digression?)

When Grandma fed her family...in an age when one did not just dip into the A&P on 5-minutes notice...what were her sources? Well, of course, the garden, enhanced by "product of the stable". Lots of good, substantial things, but always "in season". No California, Florida, or Peruvian produce out of season. Head lettuce...not really. Some fine leaf lettuce in early summer, but salads as we know them...NOT. But...cabbage products...cole slaws, sour krauts, boiled cabbage with ham or beef (corned or not). Cabbage, like plenteous potatoes, apples, winter pears...all kept well in the root cellar. Carrots, parsnips, turnips...simply left in the soil, mulched, and taken as needed. Any other excess of the garden...confined to cans and jars. Slaughtering was done when the weather became cool enough in autumn, and besides smoking and pickling, even sausage could be preserved by frying and covering in jars with melted lard. There being no hue and cry about cholesterol, lard was the preferred shortening...and ggs were consumed as available, again free of health guidelines.

Pastries...well, not to win a Pillsbury Bake-off. But...Aunt Bessie did bake a dozen or so pies of a Saturday morning, that they might have pie for dessert **THREE meals** a day...and her brothers sometimes "raided" her for a full pie apiece when they came home from a Saturday night "on the town" [?]...that is, until she baked them a pie full of dried beans, and they got the idea. And...loaves and loaves and loaves of SUBSTANTIAL, home-made bread. Bakeries were very few and far between...and in town...and their product simply did not compare in weight or taste to home-made.

In looking at the farm cooking...at the seeming-"threshers' proportions" served at most meals, one must recall that our present 2,000 calories-for-the-sedentary male was **only ONE-THIRD** of the daily requirement of a hard-working farmer. Gargantuan work load=gargantuan eating habits=(sadly) shortened life span (rather too often).

But...now...it's spring, and what was Grandfather doing? Walking the land, I suppose, to survey winter's results. Had the freezing and thawing mellowed the furrows of last fall's plowing? Any obviously weak spots in drainage that might require tiling? And, in the barn, repairing equipment, sharpening plow shares, repairing harness. In the kitchen (?), sprouting sample seeds between layers of wet cloth to see which seeds, saved from previous years, were still viable. (Grandfather COULD have bought his seed, but why buy when you can select the best of this year's crop for next year's seed? Pick the fullest, straightest ears of corn, and save the money. ([And, the age of hybrids is not yet upon us, making this easily possible.])

And when the weather broke...and spring was upon the land...the horses made it possible to get onto the land much quicker (than present-day power equipment), and without harmful compacting of the soil). First crop...likely oats. and, if it were a reasonable spring, you were certified as "slothful" in neighbors eyes if your oats were not in by April 15th. Given the lack of our present tailored-season varieties (and the danger of an early autumn), you HAD to be with it quickly! The wheat you had sowed the previous autumn was showing in a green sheen on the fields, hopefully having escaped damage by excessive freezing and thawing of the soil (Pray for a dependable snow cover!).

And, in the barn (s), ewes were lambing, sows were farrowing, cats were littering, cows were calving (not quite as frequently), mares were foaling (even less frequently)...and maybe, in the house, the farmwife was knitting booties! I cannot AUTHORITATIVELY state that the human component of farming had any predictable season for burgeoning forth, but if June is the month of romance, then March would be the month of birth, n'es pas?

(Digression #?)...Hmmmmmnnnnn...I was conceived in November of '23, shortly after Father's first Potato Disaster (Wet autumn, 40 bushels dug from a crop that begin with 40 bushel of seed potatoes). Was I some sort of Natural Consolation Prize?

Onward..ever onward!

In one interesting way, Grandfather had it far superior to today's "city slicker"...a combination "exercise studio" and renewable fuel source...known as the wood lot. Remember the possible 6,000 calorie demand? Well, since heating and cooking fuel was likely wood, cut from your own wood lot (via ax, cross-cut, and "buck" saw)...that, along with all the other hard labor obviated any need for a health-club membership. Likewise, Grandma, kneading the bread, washing clothes on a washboard, sweeping floors with a hand broom...it isn't likely that Jane Fonda's workout tapes would have found much of a market there! And, oh yes..wood smoke likely offended less than later coal smoke, and there is an appealing perfume in the first wood smoke of autumn...I say there is!

And the education of the farm child? Well, having his schoolhouse rarely more than a mile from his home (see early Dekalb County school history with nearly 90 schools (!), set about 9 to a full 36 square mile township); well, anyhow, he missed the questionable thrill of long school bus rides. For a few who had the aspiration...or the money...there were academies in Newville, St. Joe, Auburn, and elsewhere...tuition usually required. The Auburn Academy? On the west lawn of Eckhart Library "park". St. Joe? The old High School building. Newville? About where the Church is now.

Beyond local academies, some very few went on to universities, or to "Normal Schools"

(Tri-State) to become teachers. Some would begin teaching first, and then put in a few weeks or a few summers at the Normal to solidify their credentials.

But, for the most of the youth, 8 grades were enough, if they stayed even that long. The farm was their living; there they would learn what they needed to know for that age. The girls would marry, many before 18; and it was felt they could learn their skills at their mothers' sides most effectively. And how well did they both do? Rather well, I should think, for they are the progenitors of today's farmers, for whom I have a healthy respect.

A spiritual life? A cultural life? The finer things? Well, now, those rural folk of 80 years ago WERE of strong and practiced religions. The Catholic community around St. Michaels Church...The German Lutheran community in Fairfield Township; the Church of Christ folk of Coburn Corners-Alton community are but three examples of that. 1910 was the end of the Edwardian Age, itself just a continuation of the Victorian Age, and **THE** values were home and family and morality (not such a bad idea for today, although they do at times seem on the endangered list.) If and when a Revival...or a "Chataqua-type" "tented" in their area, they were an enthusiastic audience...unless there was a crop to be got in. School social functions...church social functions...the ubiquitous Strawberry Festivals and Ice-cream Socials....and Weddings, and (Yes!) Funerals, "drew" well.

Oh, please do not think there was no strain of cussedness in that age; there was! Read, in a yellowed paper somewhere, about the celebrated Concord Incest Case of 1911! But, still....it was a pretty good time to raise your kids in that pretty-good rural setting.

For, (blessed words to follow!) **in summary,** no planes, no cars, no television, no radio, no New Hampshire Primary, no daily papers, no National Inquirer...none of these yet intruded on the tranquil life of the farmer. He still believed, (as he thought George Washington had advised) in avoiding "foreign entanglements". Grandfather's life, indeed, hardly moved at any greater pace than Washington's. The Age of Tranquillity was yet upon him. For a few years yet, it will be "State Fair" for him and his world. Let his Blue Boy perk up his ears at his beloved sow, let everyone spike Mrs. Frake's mincemeat to blue-ribbon perfection, and let them enjoy their innocence! It will not come again.

But, where do I find more on the era...the subject? Well, there are the aforementioned books of Frederick Lewis Allen covering the Early Century from several different angles.

And:

The Land Remembers by Ben Logan, Heartland press, 1975,

Paperback (Waander's Bookmark can order it for you).

State Fair by Phil Strong, the book, the movie, both good.

"The Revolt of Mother", "The Bedquilt" by Dorothy Canfield Fisher,

short stories.

Malabar Farm by Louis Bromfield.

With a little luck, try listening to Your Grandparents.

Attend an Old Settlers' Day at the Fair.

REFLECTIONS ON A LADY DOCTOR

Some years agone (artful historical expression!), I had the pleasure of attending a remarkable Annual Meeting of the DeKalb County Historical Society...in a remote country church (?). (Frankly, I don't remember where it WAS held, and it's not really germane to the tale, anyhow!)

The company, as always, was pleasant. The program, *****REMARKABLE*****. A number of young ladies/matrons of the Fort Wayne area presented verbal portraits of Area Women of the Civil War, and a remarkable lot they were, too!

The portrayal that most caught my attention was that of Vesta Swarts, MD, a former Civil War nurse and bonafide humanitarian. For, you see, Dr. Swarts was "Auburn" and for more than 40 years after her graduation from the Fort Wayne Medical College, c. 1874, practiced medicine in our village.

. . . It's always a bit risky to speculate on a lady's age even for high historical purpose. . .

During the ten year gap between the cessation (another historical gem!) of the war and her training, she must also have been about the founding of her family.

It's always a bit risky to speculate on a lady's age even for high historical purpose...but...IF she were old enough to nurse during the was (1861-65), she must have been born in the late '30's. Schooling in the '70's, she was at least in her mid-30's. She lived into her mid-70's at least and spent the aforementioned 40 years alleviating the ills of Auburn...much of it from her place of practice on East 6th Street...North side just off Main...at her celebrated "Auburn Sanitary Baths".

"Baths?"..."**Massage???**... Well, dear friends, it had none of the questionable connotations that it may have now! Dr. Swarts advertised (in a charming window placard (of which I have a copy). "***Turkish Baths"***. "Electric, Thermal, Steam Baths", and "Medicated and Mineral Waters", as well as "Mechanical appliances and skilled attendants who give the **MASSAGE TREATMENT** (her emphasis), will be furnished to such persons in search of health, as may desire the advantages of a good **SANITARIUM, with** its ***REST***BATHS***and***MASSAGE. "

"A limited number of patients requiring a course of MEDICAL or SURGICAL treatment, will be received. Board and rooms furnished." Thoroughly moral that, yes?

But, said my confidential old informant, her son was in practice in his offices on the corner of Main and 6th...just next door...dealing quite often with the venereal consequences of so many single men, living in rooming houses about town! Hey, now! Not in Auburn! (Well, now...every time I doubted the accuracy or veracity of my source [and checked it out elsewhere], HE WAS RIGHT ON THE MONEY!)

WITH A LITTLE BIT OF HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

...I became a writer.

For, you see, left on my own, I would have continued on my same familiar path...writing an occasional piece for some special purpose...a tribute to a deceased school board member...some publicity for a horse show, or a club meeting or project...a script for a shuttlebus tour during ACD, but, nothing that could properly be gathered into a "book".

For years...for many years...kind people would occasionally say, "But, you should write a book." And having heard the flattering words, I did nothing.

> ...For years...for many years...kind people would occasionally say, "But, you should write a book." ...

Then John Martin Smith began his monumental County History and Mr. Craig Taylor of McComb-Dilgard-Cline suggested that I should write a series of short pieces...for use in community service ads...recounting some of the tidbits of history that were not of enough consequence to be included in a serious history...but still might deserve to be remembered. "8 or 9", was his request. It was somewhat new territory...a somewhat different audience...for me; I wrote about 18 or 19, fully expecting that he would pick and choose among them. Well, of the eight or nine asked for, he eventually had 25 printed. I had kept writing, endowed with the marvelous "source" that I had and the vague parameters given me by Craig.

The "Source"? The remarkable Silas Teddy Walters, 1903-1993, owner of a near total-recall of town events from the early 1900's to the date of his death. He willingly, ...joyously...shared his memories, some of them rather fantastic. **And, I found that whenever I grew skeptical and put them to the test, THEY WERE ACCURATE!** I would suppose that 1/4 of the more than 120 articles to date are based on Ted's memories, combined with the reminiscences of my parents, many other generous oldsters, and my own observations. I seem to have a very long-lasting source.

But, into book form? Enter two remarkable ladies, Mrs. Sirlene Smith and Rachel Roberts. Mrs. Smith, Eckhart Librarian, asserted strongly that the ads, as printed in the Star should be gathered and put on the shelves of the Library. In so doing, I got a chance to rectify some painful condensation that the Indianapolis advertising firm (first four ads only) had done. I conceived putting in the original article wherever space considerations had caused its abbreviation.

One of the ads had been of Art Smith's famous landing in Auburn on October 10, 1912. Learning that Mrs. Walter McComb was relative of the Smiths, I pursued and exploited a trove of Art Smith memorabilia, now in the hands of Herbert Wertman of Portage, Michigan. It was to be a gift to the McCombs for their kind sponsorship of the series. Well...............

When Rachel Roberts met the Art Smith piece, (now grown to nearly 50 pages), she felt it had commercial possibilities. Sadly, the several publishers we trolled it by did not take the bait...but we got some distinguished rejection slips! ACD Museum was kind enough to publish two long articles, excerpted from the work...kind encouragement from Sharon Vick.

Since the Indianapolis firm had titled the first four ads as "Auburn Reflections", I accepted the "reflection" designation, and the subsequent two longer collections of articles have featured that word in their titles, also. Hence, Auburn Reflections, On Further Reflection, Reflections in a Cooking Spoon, and such proposed works as Son of Reflections, Grandson of Reflections, and Second Cousin of Reflections, Twice Removed (?)!!

And then, in a delightful development, I began to hit the "Chicken-a-la-King" Circuit. I began to receive ego-building invitations to public presentations. I decided to model anything that I did on the celebrated First Drama Quartet of 40 years back...a group (Charles Laughton, Agnes Morehead, Tyrone Power, Charles Boyer) that simply **READ...or appeared to read...**literary works. For, you see, I believe that an audience is likely to more applaud someone who reads well, than someone who speaks well!

So, over a four year period, I have been booked to appear on the Court Square, doing Art Smith's Elopement excerpt; before the Entre Nous twice, the Rotary Club twice, the various Lions groups thrice, the Ft. Wayne Jewish Federation, the Noble County Democrat Women's Club, Heimach Center twice, Library groups twice, DeKalb County Historical Society, St. Joseph' School 6th graders, and enough other groups to reach a total of between 20 and 25.

In that time, I have also enjoyed presenting seven full sets of the four works to various groups...and I must have gifted more than 150 people with one or more of the works. I have a rule, you see, that if anyone serves as a source for me, they shall not be allowed to pay for that work.

So, does this make me the last of the big spenders? Not really, but I didn't get into the game to make money. I DO enjoy the presentations, the compliments.

But...there are more who gave to me, that I might give to my readers/listeners. My nephew in Kendallville, Mr. Richard Houser, put the first collection of articles into computerized form for the printing. My niece in Manhattan, Illinois, Mrs. Cindy Lake, did the same for the Art Smith piece. And the, a fine broth of a boy in Florence, Kentucky...and now, Fort Wayne, one Barry Bartels...and his blushing bride, Mrs. Jenny Parish Bartels, put the art work to "Reflections", and did the art and "typesetting" of both "on Further....." and "Cooking Spoon", **which was the direct result of Barry's comment, "We could make a lot of money with a cookbook!"** (The lad's a bit of a dreamer, but he has **such** a biddable nature.)

And, what I have done to this moment is to omit the single, most important contributor of all----Mrs. Judy Waanders of Waander's Bookmark, of Dekalb High School, and of the present Eckhart Library

Board of Trustees. For...without this lady, there would never have been a second, or third, or fourth...or any subsequent work. For, far more daunting to me than just writing the material is merchandising it. I hadn't the foggiest notion of how to get anything back out of my writing, and I could not have afforded to continue without some return. **VANITY PUBLISHING IS EXPENSIVE,** it is! She so very graciously offered to handle my stuff through her Auburn store, and we were away and flying. I know of no one whose business acumen and literary taste is superior to hers!

Is the work anywhere close to an end? "Quien sabe?" as they say in the spaghetti Westerns. Writer's block is as foreign to me as ...as.....as I-don't-know-what. Nice people keep reminding me of new subjects for articles. Fine new sources come to light regularly. And, inexplicable, the public seems to keep buying the stuff. I suppose that as long as I don't go bankrupt publishing my own stuff, I can continue....even given my profligate ways.

AND JUST A LITTLE OFF THE TOP, MURPH/PINKIE/PECK/HERM!

The other day I was seated in Peck's Barber Shop, not-too-patiently awaiting my turn (and trying to think how to sustain my '15 minutes of fame' [as Andy Warhol once predicted it]). I was salving the monotony of waiting by exchanging opinions with my fellow waitees...well, actually, **I was talking** and they were listening, a not-too-rare occurrence in my circles. And...and...it occurred to me that I had long (sorta) been interested in old-time barber shops, and yet had never written about them. A target...a **"palpable target"!...**as the Bard had one of the minors in Hamlet cry out. (Touch of culture there!)

Well, then, what do you remember about the barber shop, circa 1910?

No fluorescent lights...probably electric, rarely oil lamps, ceiling fan;

"Pigeon-hole" storage rack for your very own shaving mug;

> . . . I found myself charmed by the tempo of town life, that allowed the "movers and shakers" of the town to make a daily appearance at the barbershop for their morning shave. . .

Colored lotion bottles;

"Kiddie seat board", to be laid across the arms when a wee-one was brought in for a cut;

Hand clippers, and lots of scissors and

combs in disinfectant baths;

Shampooing sink, with lotsa white towels;

Bootblack stand (big city stuff, this!).

Oiled-wooden floors, or "serviceable" linoleum, with "inverted halo" of hair clippings, with lotsa white and gray!

Mandatory pot-bellied stove, surrounded in season with late Victorian

lounge lizards, prepared to discuss nearly anything at the drop of an opinion. Viz: "Will **Ol' Teddy Roosevelt** make a run at the White House in 1912, now that he's done shootin' every varmint in Africa ...and hadja heard of that crazy professor at one o' them 'Ivory League' colleges who thought them rich kids should study, 'sted of spending' all their time eatin', an' worse(!) at their clubs?" [Author's note: they "booted-him-up" to a harmless government job (Governor of New Jersey!), and he became President of the United States, 1913 to 1921...**Thomas Woodrow Wilson!**]

But, looking back to well before my birth (a trick I learned from my oldest sister!), I found myself charmed by the tempo of town life, that allowed the "movers-and-shakers" of the town to make a daily appearance at the barber shop for their morning shave. Few, if any, barber shops will now offer a shave at any price, but in 1910, they were the bread-and-butter of the barber. You needed a haircut not too often, but you needed a shave daily. So........there on the "back bar" was the rack in which your shaving mug was kept. When you entered, usually close to your daily appointed

time ("One-chair, no-waiting!"), you made a minimum of conversation with the hangers-on, and then took your barber chair. Tilted to prone, you were "cape-d", and lathered with your own badger-hair brush and from your own mug. Lathered, then hot toweled for a minute or two; lathered again, and you heard the barber stropping afresh the razor for you. Then, with a feather touch, the barber "stroked" the lather and stubble from your-jowls...more carefully on your vulnerable neck...and most carefully from under your nose (if you weren't mustach-i-oed). Extra close? He could wet your face with a lubricant (usually water would do) and go over the areas again, feeling with his sensitive fingers for any stray stubble; but once was usually enough. Then, another warm towel to soothe, followed by a cold towel to tighten up the skin. Follow with some gently scented, non-stinging "after-shave" lotion; comb the hair, straighten up the chair, "de-cant" the passenger, brush with whisk broom to finish the job, and send him off to his bank/hardware/dry goods store.

The cost? I'm not even a-gonna' tell you. You wouldn't believe it anyhow!

The effect? For the necessary 15 minutes or so, you had partaken of **sheer, HEDONISTIC pleasure.** If you have not lain in a barber chair and had **someone else** shave you!!!!!...well, it can only be equated to the proverbial **"Hog in a cool puddle on a hot day!"!!!**

And hey! If you needed a haircut (a "trim") and your barber was one of the "scissors-only" barbers, it's another hog in another cool puddle. I knew a young barber in the Army, c. 1943, who gave that sort of a haircut. After just one cut like that, I knew what "the Rockerfellers" enjoyed.

And what became of these remarkable practices? Progress, sadly; the electric clippers, King Gillette and his insidious blades, Barbasol, Aqua Velva...whatever.

Score that: One more for Progress, one less for Romance.

……………………………………………

……………………………………………

Study Questions:

1. How comfortable would those customers have been if they had ever seen the Broadway play, "Sweeny Todd (The Demon Barber of Fleet Street")?

2. Did anyone really have a razor for every day of the week, like 'Charleston Blue' in "Come Back, Charleston Blue!" And........**would they have seen them used the same way?**

3. What sort of commentary followed a near-miss on the spittoon? Or smelly feet near the pot-bellied stove?

4. What did a barber **really** think when a mother brought in a panicked/ frightened/ uncooperative child for his first haircut? When a "flapper" came in for a "bob", c. 1925?

5. What did **my mother** say to my father and my aunt when they sneaked me into a barbershop and had my **shoulder-length, red curls** cut when I was four?

6. How many sticks of chewing gum...how many pieces of candy would a barber pass out in a year to juvenile customers (who had been "good", sitting on the "booster-board" [placed across the arms of the barber chair to bring you up to 'cutting height'])?

JONES-Y REVISITED

This article was originally titled, "The Last Time I Say Jones-y", and was written in the summer of '91, just after Robert Jones had gone to a nursing home for his terminal battle with cancer. To my chagrin, I didn't go to see him then, nor again until he was "laid out" in the Funeral Home. The sentiments herein expressed are no less commanding to me now than they were then.

"An elderly friend (and a star roomer for 20 years!) recently began his terminal nursing home stay. His trip has launched me on a visceral and morbid train of thought..."How will I react when his moment melancholy becomes mine? What will I most regret leaving behind me?"

. . . The freedom...surely it will be the freedom. . .

"The Freedom.....surely it will be the loss of freedom. The airy freedom to rise when you will, or no. The freedom to eat what you will, and when you will, and where you will, and with whom you will...or no. The freedom to conduct your bodily functions, be they quaint or bizarre, in the privacy you have always known...rather than in the presence of underpaid strangers. The freedom to nap at 10 AM or watch television until 2 AM without exciting comment or censure. Yes, surely, the Freedom."

"For, when again shall I play the "Great Gate of Kiev" at massive volume: my kitchen will never again writhe under the impact of too much garlic: my beloved, overaged, thoroughly comfortable garments must yield to something readily washable, starchable, indelibly-inkable---as though they might have several patients of MY dimensions! Such freedoms I must lose?"

"And my intellectual life? Who will discuss my New Yorker's with me, or my New York Review of Books---at least while I may remain "with it" enough to discuss anything? And Sporting News, SI, Smithsonian, Geographic?"

And what of my beloved car, and the patchwork of roads it and I have known. Are we quits? I suppose so, but knowing this is not accepting it.

And then, what of my few and scattered friends? They knew me for my independence and my willingness to help them in their needs. How will they weather my becoming needy, and dependent, and whining, and not-me...as I have seen others do? As such, I could not endure myself: I must understand if they cannot.

"I'm not looking forward to visiting that friend (and I never did), for in him I see my predictable future. But...unless I am given the rare miracle of being hit by a falling star or summer lightning, I suspect his present to be my future."

It's not the way a body ought to go.

"COWED" COWED BY IT ALL

Given half the chance, most of us will romanticize the past...gaze longingly at it with rose-colored glasses. It probably never was as rosy/charming/innocent as we tell of it; indeed, there's a horrible possibility...no, certainty...that future nostalgiacs will do the same with THIS time.

Recently, I found yet another example of how I had been doing just this. I had taken such a mundane chore as milking Old Bossy and sugar-coated it. Howso?

A forward-looking young farmer...that is, a prominent young dairy farmer...asked me to contribute a piece to an agricultural series, being printed in the Evening Star. I write at the drop of a milk bucket (bit of farm-style whimsy there!), and so I spun off some 2500 words on Farming, Circa 1910. "Mystical Communion" with Farm Animals" was the part of it all. I seated the farmer on his one-legged milking stool (a.k.a. Purdue lab stool), had him press his forehead into Bossy's sleek-and-hairy side, and had him drawing forth the "skim", 1%, 2%, 4% (or you fancy Jerseys), 6-7%! (Astute City Slicker that I

> ...I suppose that many farmers have learned the above through coarse experience...literally crying (out) over spilled milk...

am, I still am amazed that Bossy can so easily decide which of those "strengths" of the butterfat she is going to "issue"...but that's a concern for a later date!) But, I digress...a totally rare experience for me!

So Young Hiram/Farmer Brown/ David Harum...whoever(!)...poises on the stool, aiming a white streak of nourishment at the barn cat...or the feet of any nearby City Slicker! **And, for the Communion Bit, he keeps his forehead pressed to Bossy's side...sort of like Mr. Spock doing the "mind-meld" bit on Star Trek.**

When I tried to run this bit of romanticizing past my young dairy farmer, he (innately politely, but **clearly,** nonetheless) informed me that it had rather a more practical side. "Good-bye" Romance; "Hello" Farm Practicality. **Communion, Hell! "YOUNG HIRAM'S 'EARLY WARNING' SYSTEM!"** It would seem that not all Bossies are models of warmth and decorum! They *****KICK***THEY DO***!.** So...............If you want to know when bossy is preparing some of her fancier barnyard ballet footwork, you keep your head in contact with her. **She "telegraphs" her moves; she cannot kick without signaling it by a tensing of her side muscles, and THAT you can feel.** So, fore(head) warned, you just lean back out of the way, taking the bucket with you!

Of course, I suppose that many farmers have learned the above through coarse experience...literally crying (out) over spilled milk. (For further whimsical reflection on this subject, corner some humorist and have him tell you the elaborate joke about "The Oklahoma Quaker and the Cow". (Yes, I know that you'd think that a Quaker should have an Eastern- Pennsylvania accent, but it's funnier to hear "thaaoow" and "caaoow", Tulsa-style! [In telling the fore(head) going joke, be sure to have checked out whether there are any Methodists in your audience, and make **VERY SURE** that they have a sense of humor!]

Casual questions for the above topic:

1. Do they feed poorer feeds...poorer pastures...to Bossy to enable her to produce the skim milk?

2. What-ever can they feed Her to produce non-fat dried milk?

3. If bossy stepped-on and scraped your kid's foot, would you:

A. Suspend all operations and call for the EMS

B. Call your lawyer and sue yourself

C. apply fresh cow manure to it, and go on milking!

(And, dear reader, have you ever got a surprise coming here!)

In re: Methodists and jokes: One does well to remember R. Nelson Snider's dictum about religious jokes---"When telling (such) jokes, be sure to include every congregation in your jokes. If you offend anyone, it is far more likely because you omitted them than otherwise!"

“SEVENTEENTH SUMMER” TIMES FOUR

In a lovely, by-gone era when I was accumulating "num-nums" for my old age (teaching and contributing toward my pension fund), one of my duties (from 1949 to 1962, at least) was to direct the class play. I have already confessed, in previous works ("The Little Rude Schoolhouse"), to my inadequacies at this assignment...and they were manifold! Fortunately, I was largely ignorant...as were all of the administrators who made such assignments...to the real qualifications of a play director. So, adventurously/buoyantly/ignorantly - I charged forth to lead my juvenile Thespians...or whatever.

The play with which I had the most fun (or did the most damage, according to my critics) was Maureen Daly's "Seventeenth Summer". Mrs. Daly had, as an actual 17-year-old, written this seemingly-shallow, certainly-sentimental tale of that summer in the life of a sheltered young lady. It was very popular with the high school girls of that age, telling as it did of first love in conflict with reality. The heroine, Angie, had been educated in a private school (an experience then unknown to us), was preparing for college in

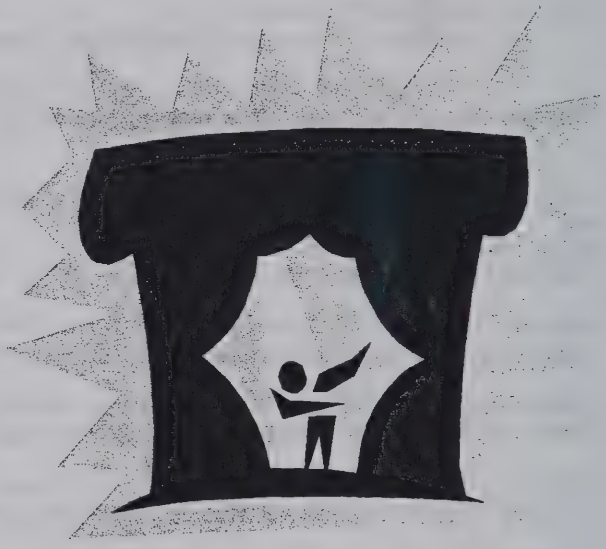
. . . There were about three times in my career when I felt that I had let my students down...would have given anything to undo the damage. . .

the fall, and had struck up a summer romance with handsome Jack, the delivery boy. Would she give up her plans for college to stay home in the little Wisconsin town, inasmuch as he could not afford to go to college with her?

Angie's family was pure "Father-Knows-Best" quality. Mature, settled, happy oldest sister; Margaret; unhappy, borderline neurotic next-oldest sister, Loraine; and semi-bratty, Tom-boyish younger sister, Kitty. Father and Mother: cut from cookie molds, with lots of sugar on top. Standard, soap-opera friends--the catty Jane-with designs on Jack; Tony, the wolf; comfortable, settled Art (engaged to oldest sister). And...lots of sentimental, home-style poetics in the prologues to each of the acts, and the epilogue.

Well, first time out of the barn--Leo High School, fall production, 1954. **TYPE CASTING!!!---without me ever realizing it!** The students who tried out perfectly fit the parts, the more so because most of them were really acting themselves. The neurotic sister HAD been "in analysis"; the beautiful Angie had never had a date; Jack was the popular, all-American boy type [though of a family that certainly could have sent him to college].

We performed it on the grotesque new Leo High School stage; it was a fine production, in every opinion except the principal's. His comment, "We like our plays funny here at Leo!" (Well, for a spring production, I gave him "Hillbilly Courtship" with a set of sight gags that would have embarrassed Milton Berle!) But, the first "Summer" **was** good, even if a bit short on the snobbish "redeeming



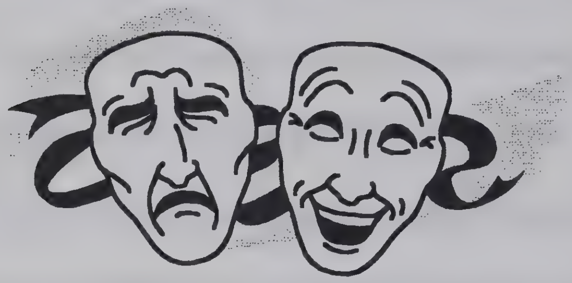
social merit". On rare occasions, now some 40 years later, I run into Art or Kitty (I later taught children of each of these in yet other schools)...and I remember them better for the play than anything else.

Performance #2...Riverdale, c. 1959. Nothing succeeds (and repeats) like success. This time, mischance struck my cast early, with surprisingly fine results. I had picked the play in Spring, for production the following autumn...largely because I had a mint-quality Kitty (the 11-year-old sister.) Being the clever, adaptive All-American teacher (that I wish I were), I compensated with a very baggy sweatshirt and pigtail braids, along with lavishly applied freckles.

My Angie, a savior of the Spring play when she changed from prompter to lead (following a case of "mono" by my leading lady), carried it off beautifully. Beautifully! - even when Mother failed to give Kitty the proper exit cue and left her on-stage during Jack and Angie's "reconciliation scene" in the third act. Poor Kitty looked like she had egg on her face, but it was Mother's fault. Angie sensed the problem and manufactured stage action and dialogue that sent Kitty off, albeit on the wrong side of the stage. Poor Kitty had to pelt her way clear around the back of the school building to get to the proper side for her next entry on-stage! But...Mother did make scrumptious blueberry muffins for every rehearsal and for the performances, guaranteeing dramatic authenticity, at least!

And then I went to Garrett High School, for the last of my "Summers", c. 1959. I cringe yet! Oh, it was a fine play, with largely good memories and good performances. It was me. Angie needed a piece of luggage for act III...her getting-ready-for-college scene. Sweet Susie Smith, my Angie, brought a new Samsonite suitcase, vinyl-sided.

(There is a very worthwhile rule that you do not ever use new-ANYTHING as a prop in a play, damage being such a possibility. We ignored it, to Susie's sorrow.) I was making signs for the play, using a re-fillable, felt-tip pen. Somehow the oil-based ink splattered, and Susie's new suitcase was spotted prominently. Bad, bad, bad is how I felt...and so did Susie. There were about three times in my career when I felt that I had let my students down...would have given anything to undo the damage. That was one of them.



The play was a success again, with otherwise pleasant memories. Jack, for instance, had a speech impediment in everyday life that he totally overcame to give a fine performance. Mother had a magnificent corona of hair, which she dressed meticulously each day. One of the girls took it down during an "off-stage" moment for mother, and then unexpectedly I called for the "mother" scene. She came flying on stage, looking like Crystal Gale...That "Mother" did her exceptional (for a teen-ager) preparation for her role: She "stalked" the school's mature librarian for days, observing her "mature woman" walk, and then perfectly duplicating it on-stage. Not such a great feat in anyone's opinion?...Then try describing how an adult's walk differs from a teenager's! ...And, the School Board raised the **next** director's salary **at my request.** And I went out of the directing business. ....And then I went to Waterloo, and talked my friend, Mary Evelyn Moore, into doing "Summer #4". (I handled the set construction, publicity, etc........I think.)

Well, Angie was a very-gingery Ginger Haislip. Jack was a non-dewey Dewey Karnes. On Friday night (dress rehearsal), Dewey ate a green onion, deliberately, just before the "reconciliation/love scene" in Act III, the scene of *****the KISS!!!***** Ginger remarked about it when she came offstage. "Well, Ginger, if you want to try it, I think we can arrange for you to pay Dewey back," said the 295 pound mischief-maker. And so, it came to pass, at the Saturday night performance, that Ginger chewed a clove of raw garlic just before the big scene. Her line was, with **heavy aspiration,** **"OHHHHHHH, JACK!!!!!"**, and she kissed him soundly. Reaction? As Jack exited the scene, he looked at **me (!),** and remarked, **"YOU RAT!!!"** Discipline the boy for a disrespect to a teacher? Don't be dumb! I was delighted.

I returned to Garrett High School again, then to Eastside High School, and finally to DeKalb High School; and never ventured onto the stage again. But, the other day, I was looking through a box of personal jewelry, and there were a pair of beautiful cufflinks set with a row of red stones and engraved "Seventeenth Summer". Just let the Rockerfellers try to match that!

MISCELLANY: Kitty #2 grew up, graduated Riverdale and IU, and became a dominant force on the DeKalb Central School Board. She will never lose the dramatic flare she so charmingly displayed on the "boards" at Old St. Joe.

Father #2 became the most admirable politician I have ever met, and a fellow teacher.

Jack #3 became a teacher for a time, but then launched himself successfully in the business world.

The neurotic sister, Lorrain #3, "used" me (took my course in Spanish, largely to secure a role in the play) and then dumped the course immediately after the play was history.

Mother #3 was the best organized student I have ever seen and had the extremely good taste to become a teacher of **exactly** the same subjects in which I had taught her! She was chosen the outstanding teacher of the Bloomington school system within a few years of her graduation from IU, 1964. And...could that girl do real justice on the piano to Leucona's "Malaguena"! Carramba!

HANK AND THE REMARKABLE SALVE

"There is a balm in Gilead
To heal the sick and wounded there,"

.......or so goes a lovely old Hymn of my scant acquaintance. It would have meant little to me in my life, me having little willing experience with religion...but for a medical oddity of my father's making. Father, like most farmers, was rather more inclined to look out for the health of his livestock than for his own, and the few remedies he knew were of the type to alarm conventional practitioners of medicine.

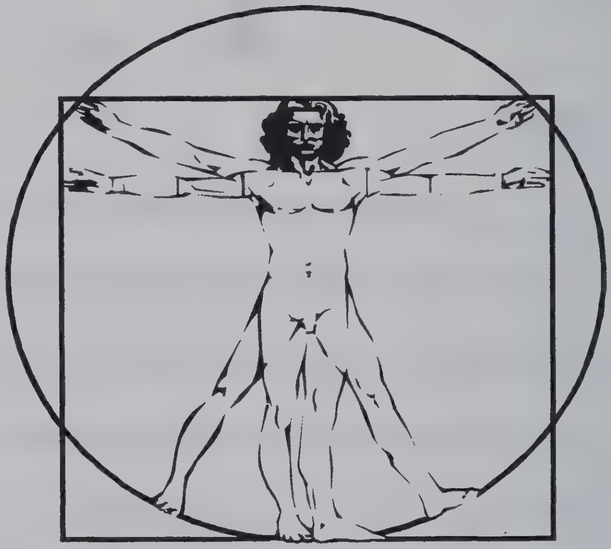
One of those remedies he DID use was Mrs. Corcoran's "Balm of Gilead" salve. The product closely resembled some of the herbal remedies featured in such works as the "Foxfire" series...an infusion of the buds of the celebrated Balm of Gilead tree (not by any means common to this area...or this country), mutton tallow...and likely other herbal substances unknown to me. The end product was comfortably scented salve of tan color, (and when stored for years, ivory-like consistency!)

. . . The product closely resembled some of the herbal remedies featured in such works as the "Foxfire" series. . .

I knew of Father's use of the salve in the 1940's, but after his death in 1950, I hadn't any idea where it might be again obtained. Mrs. Corcoran seemed to live somewhere near Auburn Junction, father had indicated...but where? No great moment at the time of his passing, for he had left a small supply, and you didn't use much at a time, anyhow.

The 50's and 60's passed, and the supply was gradually used up. In the 1970's, I enjoyed the pleasant acquaintance of Hank and Luetta Carper of Norland Park. Sometime after the death of Hank's remarkable mother, Minna Carper, I remarked upon Mrs. Corcoran's superior salve. Within a very brief time, Hank presented me with a 303 can of the precious nard. It had been found, along with several others, in Mrs. Carper's cupboards after her death. Mrs. Carper apparently had also had the formula and the skill necessary to produce it. It was a gift of CONSIDERABLE value to me!

The 70's passed; the 80's passed; the 90's were half over when I met Hank's son, Dennis. Hank and I had, though completely amicable, nonetheless drifted away from each other. I chatted briefly with Dennis, honestly complimented his father, and suggested that he mention to Hank that IF Hank had anymore of the salve, I'd be rather interested in it. (My supply was nearly gone by now.!



A few nights later, a pleasant phone call: "Was I going to be home for a while?" For a fact, "Yes," but I'd gladly have changed any plans...and I really wasn't thinking of the salve at the moment. When Hank arrived, he presented me with another 303 can of salve, **fully 20 and perhaps 30 or 40 years old!**

Friends! That stuff has shelf life, for it was of the 1970's stock, at least. (I did find, after a couple of decades, that it tends to sort-of dry out. My single contribution to its effective use was to "nuke" it to a mahogany liquid in my microwave, and then to mix in enough mineral oil to make it again spreadable.)

I have now...without fear of contradiction...a LIFETIME SUPPLY of Balm of Gilead salve.

Do I hear a voice of cynical asperity, asking "What's all the fuss about?" Well, now, Bunky, there is also a doctor of medicine in Auburn, a Doctor of Fearsome Reputation, who also places such a store in Mrs. Corcoran/Minna Carper's salve. He has gone so far as to track down the original formula and attempt to brew the product himself. (It is reputed to be impossible to get the supplies domestically...even for a doctor. But, he thinks enough of it to have tried it!

"Well, then, just what does it do?" "Well, with that much sheep's tallow in it, it is very, very high in lanolin content, you know, it is superior for softening calluses...for starters. It is regarded as superior in drawing power. It is soothing for irritated or inflamed surface areas." And, like the man said, it has a pleasant herbal scent to it, also.

Add to that: you'd be surprised how effective a skim of it on the palms and rubbed into the newly laundered hair is as a dressing! I have used Squibb toilet lanolin as a hair dressing, and it doesn't work any better!

In the face of technological hauteur (I'll wait while you figure that one out!), I'm cautious about claiming too many benefits, lest I sound like a medicine show spieler. But, my father liked it; Minna Carper liked it; friend Hank likes it; the doctor likes it; Hubert likes it also. But.....but.....Hubert will **NOT** share his supply with anyone! For…

"There is a balm in Balm of Gilead salve,
That soothes with a touch of ancient care.
And "Yes", that Balm of Gilead salve,
Looks good on old gray hair!"
So there!

ON BEING A THOROUGHLY ROTTEN CADDY

It's one of those "God,-but I-hate-Indiana-weather" days, and to survive, I sink deeper into my recliner, turn up the heating pad another notch, and tune my television to the Pebble Beach or Los Angeles Open or Phoenix Open golf tournaments. And then, presently, I begin to wonder, "Is THAT really the sport that I labored in so many years ago, as the World's Worst Caddy?" "They are playing for obscene amounts of money; I "perfected" my wretched art at 30 cents for nine holes (and was probably lucky to get that!).

The places a kid could get any money in the '30's were rather limited. Allowances? Only the kids on North Main had those. Collect junk for sale to Lonergan's on 2nd Street? It took an unbelievable mass of newspapers, usually delivered on a coaster wagon, to earn a few pennies. Mow lawns? Do household chores? (The near-terminal thrill of having a wooden ladder break UNDER me [while washing Bill Roeder's second story windows] cured me of the latter.) So, like my brother before me, I entered the ranks of the caddie...and I was rank and ranked.

. . . What was it, you may wonder, that distinguished me in my miserable performance? . . .

Beginning caddies give definitive definition to "low man on the totem pole". As a beginner, you were put to the test not very often, and then, usually, you really were "put to the test". Older, experienced caddies knew the walking lemons and knew how to avoid them. Let one of the "Classic-City Cheapies" but pull into the parking lot, and your master caddies evaporated. They would invisibly await the plums---Charlie Welch, Bob South, or the Messenger ladies. Greenie-you got Herb Nigg or Art Paulsen or, (perish the thought!), the Hicksville Armada, really somewhat akin to the Oklahoma land rush or the Plagues of Egypt, but with golf clubs in hand!...Or, if it were a tourney and your brother (now a quality golfer) wanted to economize, your brother. Their particular evils, respectively: didn't tip and played badly, didn't tip and was a mean SOB, didn't tip and left you to take ALL of the pins for a seven-some; (All was not lost in the last two cases: I'd never have seen the Bryan Country Club without Broher.)

What was it, you may wonder, that distinguished me in my miserable performance? Well, I occasionally experienced a memory loss when it came to being quiet. By '38 and '39 and '40, I was becoming a chunky little wonder that could do marvelous things to a ball track on the green when I was taking a pin. My eyesight seemed normal, but following the flight of the ball, especially into the rough or the woods--just wasn't my forte. I didn't have the panache of "Pinkie" Honness; or the mature attraction of Wilbur Seigel. I had no cute nickname like the "Friday"/ "Saturday"/"Sunday" Treeshes. I could keep score, but there are SOME golfers who don't really relish accuracy in this department. I washed golf balls pretty well. I never had either the nerve or the aim to "stomp" a "lost" ball (to be retrieved later). I just whispered and clanked and sweated and lurched about my infrequently demanded duties. Now I wonder, could I have been the first "generic" caddie?

Whatever it was, I caddied from '37 to '41. I made a little pocket change. I learned some of the ropes of life from the lurid tales of the older caddies. Once, I had an absolutely profound discussion with Alice Messenger about 'How to eat a lobster',---surely the height of presumption on my part and surely a source of amusement to her. I did certainly learn that wealth and generosity were not common companions among wealthy golfers of Auburn Country Club. I learned that the game could instill such passion in its devotees that nothing...not laughter...not even risking six weeks in traction...could deter them from their "appointed rounds". (consult someone who has seen O. J. Sharpe teeing off!) (Also, see a picture of my brother fishing a ball from the creek in a remarkable three-point stance.)

Did the game ever rub off on me? Not much, no. I did play enough on "caddie days" to learn that with just a little more abandon, I could have "sliced" in a complete circle.

When I left caddying, I was yet associated with the game for two years...summers of '42 and '46, as a groundskeeping employee. I worked for Wigg Cler in '42 and for Louie Gibford in '46. In the winter of '46, I ballooned to 295 pounds, effectively ending my greenskeeping career. (Give a thought to having a 295 pounder walking in your putting line!) As a memento of the latter assignment, I took away an injured sacroiliac that hounded me for 20 years thereafter. Perhaps, considering my contribution to golf, it was only justice. But, I do understand the pleasure of a sport played amid 135 acres of manicured greens, tees, and fairways. The fresh air, the sunshine, and the chance to impress your fellow golfers with your wardrobe, your equipment, your duck hook!

A MOMENT OF MARTHA

Martha Falka was the stuff that small-town legends may be made of: warm hearted, colorful, at once both generous and frugal...of mixed elements! As the local distaste for the memories of Auburn Auto and its untimely closing abated (and were replaced by nostalgia and profit), those who had worked there came to be honored for their achievements, among them, Martha. Yet, a present day survivor of the office force, perhaps a bit envious at Martha's late-found prominence, cattily observed that Martha never held more position than office girl and mail distributor...and claims that she didn't get the mail right sometimes, either!

Well, those of us who knew Martha didn't worry any more about her intellectual attainments (than we hoped she would worry about ours!) I knew her as a voracious reader and a rewarding conversationalist. She could talk...she WOULD talk on a variety of subjects. She was accommodating to her listener. What THEY wanted to talk about, she would attempt. Once in a while, you suspected that she was molding her opinions to make you

. . . As she became a legend, she stirred generous impulses in those who knew her . . .

comfortable; but hey now! What do we like any better than someone who will agree with us?

Example: the First Mate and the Green Beans. Of a summer's evening, the First Mate stopped by for a bag of Martha's best. Conversation yielded the fact that he had just come from his garden, where he had been picking green beans. No guile, no evil intent on Martha's part...she immediately remarked, "Oh, I don't know HOW long it's been since I had a good mess of green beans!" No comment by the First Mate, but within the hour, he had returned with a shopping bag, well-filled with green beans. Profuse thanks from Martha. But, after he had departed, (warmed no doubt by her response), she turned and remarked to a friend, "I don't know what I will do with them. I DON'T EVEN **LIKE** GREEN BEANS!" Deceitful? No, she was just making idle conversation, and likely making her listener feel good in the exchange! Martha.

Martha and the beer. As she became a legend, she stirred generous impulses in those who knew her. The collection of fine friends who so often and so willingly aided her...and enabled her to continue her popcorn operation, they are a lovely story in themselves. So too, the bar patrons of the 4 Crowns, who often sent Martha a libation to enliven a summer's evening. Practical Martha, she soon gave instruction to the bar personnel that beers were to be sent unopened. Thus, the beers could be shelved, saved, and consumed during the long winter. Practical, for she could operate her popper and cash drawer free of alcoholic influence. Sadly, I am told that beer, once refrigerated and then brought back to ambient temperature, is NOT "fit fer man nor beast!" Didn't seem to bother Martha!

But the mixed drinks sent over to her on the biggest night of her year, the Friday Night Classic Car Gabfest on West 9th Street?

There was no storing of those drinks; they MUST be drunk...and after a while, so was Martha, nearly. Fortunately, some of her trusted lieutenants were on hand to help her through the crush of business. Usually, she was meticulous in her cash box operation, but on one occasion, she finally admitted defeat, threw all the bills and coin into the box, willy-nilly, and said the equivalent of, "What the heck!"

And, how we missed her when she was gone! One local wag, probably camouflaging their anticipated loss, suggested that when she DID pass on, the services of a taxidermist should be used, that the Museum's display of her celebrated bench have an unmatchable touch of authenticity! Another friend gave her perhaps a more suitable tribute when they went to Farmer's Market last year, purchased a massive quantity of fall flowers, went to the cemetery (and supposedly shinnied over a fence from the Auburn Gear parking lot), located her resting place, and held a long conversation...if a bit one-sided...with her.

Her popcorn stand remains open, an example of her planning and generosity. Her recipe for caramel corn (which SHE purchased from Berneice Wible) and oil-boiled peanuts are to be found in a recently published cookbook. Her bench is here in the Museum,...And, her memory lives on in the hearts and minds of her friends. You don't really do a lot better than that, now do you?

FURTHER ASPECTS OF RESTAURANTEURING AT 126 W. 8TH STREET

I was personally satisfied with my mother's starting a restaurant at 126 West 8th Street, Auburn...thereafter known as "The City Cafe" or just, Mrs. Stackhouse's. I was thirteen; I was hungry.

Mother had a touch of practicality, and such of her children as were still available and/or malleable were put into service. Sister Betty was work brickle, as the term is given. She made a fine waitress, and additionally plied domestic skills at home. I was somewhat less "brickle", but my meager skills could be applied to some lowly restaurant chores. To wit:

Vermin control. We had mice...no way that you could long keep them out. Trapping was the answer and I ran a "trap line", mostly in the basement. I was placed on an incentive system...5 cents per mouse corpse, shown to Mother. Sadly, honesty was not my long suit, and this incentive died when Mother realized that I was selling the same mouse to her repeatedly. I haven't the clearest memory of it, now some 55+ years later, but I would guess that I probably had to immolate them in the fires of the coal cook stove, in her pres-

. . .Mother would buy her birds on the hoof . . .

ence, thereafter.

Floor mopping. Surely God hates custodians! Why else would "battleship linoleum" have been invented? It NEVER looked attractive, even when freshly mopped and waxed. Getting it to a highly waxed sheen was a chore...a bonafide chore! It fell my lot to do just that each Friday night, usually after 9 PM, or so. It must be mopped with hot, sudsy water...sudsy with Mother's home-made soap (heavy on the lye!). It must thereafter be rinsed with cold water, removing any residue and allow it to dry. Apply a substantial coat of liquid wax, wait for THAT to dry, and then return the furniture to its proper place...4 square tables and 16 chairs, exactly! (But, the kitchen was mopped daily by the dishwasher, and at least I didn't have to do that.) Time hung heavy on one's hands, waiting for drying...or just taking a breather. One could entertain oneself by making Olympic-quality malted milkshakes! Heavy on the ice cream (Puritan, and ambrosia at that!), heavy on the chocolate (and damn the zits!), heavy on the alt, and a modicum of milk. If it approached "setting-up" in the metal Hamilton Beach "cup", it was just about right.

Added to the access I had to Mother's other cooking, it will surprise none that my weight would balloon from 185 in September to 235 by the following May (Summer would bring more exercise, causing the weight to subside.)

The Front Window. Mother did NOT like domestic work, possibly the result of being forced to it when my parents bankrupted at farming and came into town in November of 1924. But...**but...BUT...** she did demand exquisite performance of others in performing those same chores for her. The front window of the City Cafe was a case in point. As you look at it now, there on the front of the Madden-Widner Insurance agency, you see barely more than half of its original expanse. Taken altogether, it took SOME washing. And, according to sacred formula. One must use hot water and vinegar (once or twice, I do remember trying it with ammonia), brush, squeegee, and chamois. You must reach every corner with the vinegar water, usually including down the pole and up your arm!) Then, it must be squeegee-ed in careful, overlapping strokes, the squeegee being wiped dry after every stroke. When totally squeegee-ed, then wipe around every edge with the chamois to remove any possible water streaks along the edge. THEN, **INSPECT IT CAREFULLY** (before she could). And, then, "Tomorrow is another day...for window washing." And, there were two or three side windows, giving out on the back brick wall of the hardware, that could/should/must be washed from time to time. We needed a nice clear view of the bricks, I suppose (and I don't feel any better about it at 71 than I did at 13-14-15.)

And, finally, "The Fridge" and the "Slaughter Yard". An outside stairway to the basement could be found in the mini-courtyard between the restaurant and the Auburn Printing Company. It didn't go to waste, no siree! Refrigeration was limited to the ice cream chest and a large, double-door fridge. More than that was needed, particularly for very large vessels..the chili and the mincemeat canners. Fortunately, both of these delicacies were cold-weather items. Mother would make a 20-quart enamel canner of chili soup

(Mother's chili was not the thick, gummy gruel common now.) It WAS a soup of superior ingredients and talent, with a spicy, full-flavored broth atop it! But, it required refrigeration when "brewed", inasmuch as Mother would never have used enough spices in it to anaesthetize bacteria. So, where to refrigerate something that large?...and Mother had a superior recipe for "20-quart mincement" that was exercised, sometimes several times in a winter. No bacteria could have stood the vinegar, spies, apple jelly...a totally acidic environment...in the final product, but it seemed to require refrigeration also.

Well, now...at that outside cellarway, there was a ledge on each side of perhaps 18"...and all enclosed in a shed-like cover with a lockable outside door. You got it, Bunky! From November through March, whenever needed, I could be sent with a knife, large spoon, and dipper to the "storage". Usually, the chili or mincement were frozen into a loose slush. If firmer, take the knife and cut off a chunk, dipper it, and bring it back into the kitchen. (Some simpleton will surely wonder if I put both of them in the dipper at the same time! "No, Clem, (as in Clem Kadiddlehopper, Charlie McCarthy's ox-brained fellow dummy), I didn't!"

But, by far the most spectacular, and most likely to catch the attention of the Board of Health...the slaughter yard. Chickens, as any history buff can tell you, were often slaughtered, plucked, and drawn at home. Mother would buy her birds on the hoof, and I was their means to eternity. On the west side of the

aforementioned cellar way were three or four thin, galvanized metal "conical cylinders" (Donald Coar, be proud of your old geometry student!) [That's a cone with its narrow tip cut off!] Taking a doomed chicken by its feet and wing-tips, it was thrust down into the cone. Its head was pulled through the narrow opening, and swiftly severed by a butcher knife. The cone restrained the spasmodic heavings of the decapitated bird, and it "bled-out" rather well. It was, for a fact, faster to do than to tell you of it.

A Saturday evening **25 cent chicken supper** required perhaps 3 or 4 chickens (at two pieces per customer). The Sunday **50 cents deluxe dinner** would require 4 or 5 more birds be dispatched to the Great Poultry yard in the Sky.

Once the slaughter was completed, buckets of boiling water were brought from the kitchen, corpses were dipped, and then (on sheets of newspaper), feathers were removed. There was a modicum of technique required here. Water too hot, or bird immersed too long...the delicate skin might tear, particularly on the wings. And, in early summer when the molting season was upon us, removal of the pin feathers was an exacting job, particularly with darker-feather chickens like the Plymouth rocks (I don't now remember too much variety in the breeds of chickens involved. I'd like to name drop some of the Buff Orpingtons or the Auracanians or the Dominickers, but I doubt that I ever saw any of these. There were just white and reddish-brown and gray-black chickens.

And then, I tidied up the feathers, disposed of the heads (They had a kind of vacant look about them. But then...even when a chicken is alive, it is mentally pretty vacant!) I took the carcasses into the kitchen, and began the drawing process. First, each bird was held over the open flame in the coal cook stove to singe off the hairs **(And YES, chickens do have a sort of hair in there with all those**

feathers!). Then, wash them carefully in cold water and begin inspecting them for pinfeathers. There IS something satisfying about a perfectly plucked and prepared chicken, and I ENJOYED it even then! Next, open the body cavity, remove the viscera, and OH SO CAREFULLY cut the gall bladder away from the liver. Open and clean out the contents of the gizzard (stomach). Locate and save the heart. Discard all else, and seal it up pretty good, too. (Chicken innards spoil easily and smell grandly!) Finish by cutting the birds into serving pieces, usually eight good pieces..two each of drumsticks, thighs, wings, and generous breast servings. The remaining backs were divided into two and used as 1/2 of the Saturday Night 25 cent chicken special. Livers? Save them for Homer Gossett, the Western Union Manager, who came in every 5th or 6th Saturday night for sautéed chicken livers. Gizzards, hearts? They were cooked along with the rest of the chicken, but I don't remember them ever being requested or served. Some of he chicken, probably the throw-away backs and necks, were used to make a fine chicken noodle or chicken rice soup that went with the Sunday dinner.

And, once in a while, Mama obtained an ancient, super-tough barnyard tyrant...an old rooster. All the usual treatment, up to cooking. To cook, boil the old duffer for hours...he must fall from the bone. Carefully pick the meat over, pack it in a loaf pan, and boil down the broth. It was laden with natural gelatin, and poured over the picked-off chicken and chilled, made a **superior** chicken loaf for sandwiches.

Mama lived before the age of broasting, and she would have disdained French frying anything but potatoes. No. Her method of cooking was to dredge the chicken in flour, brown it in butter/shortening, and "steam" it done in a covered roaster. If the chicken was tough (a bit elderly at its time of passing?), she was known to interlace it with 8 or 10 very large, very clean iron spike nails. They conducted the heat quite well, and the end product came out tender **and** flavorsome, owing to its maturity.

"What would the Board of Health have said about my slaughter yard...our fridge?"

Today, gasps of horror. Then, they so much enjoyed the end product, accompanied by Mama's pies and tender biscuits and the like, that they would likely have clucked their tongues (appropriate for chicken dinners?) and looked the other way. For a fact, only one person never became sick from a meal of the City Cafe, and he...sheer gluttony. (A young man, working on the installation of the sewage disposal plant in the late 30's, was treated by his father to a glorious birthday dinner: **a 3-pound Porterhouse, French fries, and a whole strawberry pie w/ whipped cream topping!)** The poor kid DID nearly die of his overeating, but it wasn't Mama who nearly killed the kid with birthday kindness.

Times have changed some since then. Madden does not slaughter chickens behind his place of business. Chickens are delivered now totally cleaned and cut into impossible portions (not by hand-knife, but by a frightening cousin to the circular saw). Parts we once disdained have been raised to "cuisine" by being "Buffalo-ed", or "rumaki-ed". And, Frustrated Gourmets of the World, try finding a chicken that is a lovely "noodle-yellow" for having had genuine barnyard dirt under its feet. If you know someone who raises chickens thusly, **CULTIVATE THEM!**

THE GOOD MEN GET TOGETHER

In 1917 and in Chicago, a group of inspired businessmen paused one day...one presumes at a luncheon...to observe that talents such as theirs could serve humankind better if they united in an organization...which they chose to call the Lions Club. It was the proverbial idea whose time has come, but NOT come and gone. It is, I'm happy to say, here to stay.

Within ten years, it had spread rather widely through the Midwest and Plains States, including Ft. Wayne and Garrett.

Eyeing prospective spots for extension, their eyes fell on Auburn. A delegation of Garrett Lions, with the aid of International Rep. George Bormuth of Fort Wayne Central Lions Club, began talking with Herman Brown, a local insurance agent, and then other business and professional leaders. Within a relatively short period of time, 28 of them agreed to accept the Charter and the challenge of serving Auburn. On a very warm June night (the 4th, of 1928), they met in the K of P Lodge Rooms (2nd floor, Waterbed Heaven) for their Charter Meeting. Their president was, rather naturally, Herman Brown; his son, Bernard, was secretary; and local banker

...They were mandated by their charter and affiliation to SERVE...

Harry Casebeer served as treasurer. The membership was an excellent mixture of business and professional men: a doctor (Nugen), a dentist (Graham), a lawyer (Endicott), school men (Zeigler, Young), insurance (Brown, Gonser and West), plumbing and heating (Lige, Weaver..and Widney), autos (Holben), media (Nicolai)...and a duke's mixture of other professions.

What was so different about THIS group? Well...they were not simply a "meet-to-eat" or "meals-for-deals" club. They were mandated by their charter and affiliation to SERVE. (There was a respectable body of opinion in the community that would have doubted the need for such service, but the Lions soon proved them wrong.)

Perhaps the first noticeable benefit conferred by the Auburn Lions was not to Auburn, but to Waterloo. The Lions enjoyed their movement, and rather quickly extended it to Waterloo, which was chartered in 1929. (Thereafter, but not immediately, they would render similar service to Butler, St. Joe, Corunna, Cedar Creek [Leo], Huntertown, Bryan [Ohio], Land-of-Lakes [Steuben County lake district]...and although local records do not confirm it, Angola recently asserted that Auburn was also their "daddy".)

What really put the Lions on the map, locally? The rickety bridges at 7th and 9th Streets on Cedar Creek needed replacement, and the Lions focused local attention and pressure on the County Commissioners...pressure that resulted in new bridges. Then, a popular young husband in Auburn was killed at the West 7th Street New York Central crossing, and the Lions led the battle to force the railroad to erect crossing warning lights and crossing gates. Toward the end of the 30's, Lions also used their muscle power to the first of a pair of clean-up projects on the old cemeteries on South Union Street. Note: little funding was involved. The 30’s were lean times, and even with the development of the car raffle project in the late 30's, funds were still limited.

By the late 40's, funding prowess had improved. The Horse Show of 1946 was an earning revelation; post-war car raffles bore remarkable returns that underwrote the signal project of all Auburn Lion history--the Little League Park on Union Street.

The "steering committee" of the Little League project was blue ribbon, and then some. For starters, it had TWO mayors (Hoham and Oren), city councilmen, and other community leaders, all Lions. No exact figure can be found for its construction and subsequent improvements, but knowledgeable observers have estimated it at $25,000, AND LABOR! A city dump site, on land owned and thence contributed by the Thomas family, was converted into the premier facility of its type in Northern Indiana.

As of this writing, that Club is now into its 69th year. In that time, total funds raised and spent on local or state Lions projects probably exceed $300,000...not to mention the tens of thousands of hours of Lion labor. Some of the largest recipients of Lions funds would have to include more than $30,000 in scholarship grants, more than $15,000 in Youth Exchange trips, an average of more than $10,000 **EACH** to Leader Dogs for the Blind, Indiana Lions Eye Bank, Indiana Lions Cancer Control, Sight Conservation (probably double the given figure for eyeglasses for the needy). Lions Kidney Foundation, Diabetes Awareness, and Puppy Program are similar, if less heavily funded projects. And, for each dollar and each hour of Lions time expended on the above projects, at least that much has also been expended on smaller-but-equally-deserving local projects, the greater part of which focus on the community's youth ...frequently administered through the schools.

And was every project a triumph? Hardly, but an honest 90% or better of them were. Some were quiet...unspectacular...but they served: painting parking meters, painting bike safety signs, cutting weeds in a cemetery, assembling a park pavilion and...whatever needed.

ON COLORFUL RELATIVES

As you've read my offerings, you've perhaps reached the conclusion that I had exotic...some might say "flaky"...relatives. I tend to think it not so; the same interesting (I hope) people run in all families; they just don't find the authors there that they deserve.

You've likely got an "Uncle Slick", enough of a wit to attract an amoral heiress for a wife, but not enough charm or intelligence to keep her from setting an Olympic record for infidelity (at least by Hicksville standards!)

Even his going out had these two elements about it. He had sued her for divorce (after decades of cuckoldery), changed the beneficiary on his insurance, and then relented (On the very day of the divorce hearing, she was forced to miss the funeral of her last paramour. Perhaps he sympathized with the strain she was under!) Well, sir, they ended his days together, but when the funeral expenses were to be paid, the new beneficiary at first refused to fork over the cash, and then made sure that the funeral and the headstone consumed the entire $1,000! He'd've laughed!

> ...the same interesting (I hope) people run in all families...

The possibly-grieving widow may or may not have appreciated her opponent getting in a final, like there. They had been sisters-in-law, and with no love lost. The widow had often fomented trouble within the family by such acts as encouraging my mother, a young bride at the time, to "Get into the kitchen quickly, Hazel, before she does!" The opponent wasn't the fine cook Mother was, and she resented the obvious slight paid her.

She herself was not much of a cook. Her husband was chosen by our grandmother to run the farm after Grandfather Stackhouse died in 1918, thereby denying my father an assured job and living. Salt in the wound? Grandmother Stackhouse let Uncle Slick purchase Grandfather's Ford. A bit of irony I observe now, almost 80 years later, the farm went under, the Ford wore out, and Grandma missed all of the good cooking she's have had at my mother's hand!

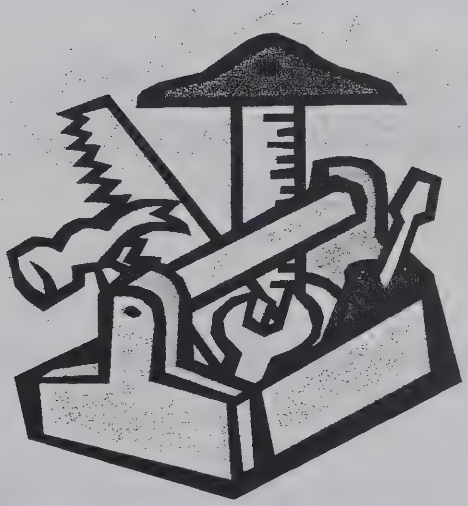
Uncle Slick spent the rest of his life as a sort of ribbon-clerk in a Hicksville hardware; the wife slowly consumed the several parcels of real estate that were her legacy and ran innumerable little crossroads groceries, the better to ply her romantic wiles, I suppose. And...when she came at last to die, she was living in a grossly unkempt mobile home on one of her few remaining lots with lots and lots of daintiness-challenged cats! The odor was s-t-u-l-t-i-f-y-i-n-g, and thassa' fact! Once is all we visited her in those circumstances, and we sat MOST warily...we did!

And then there was Uncle George.

Fate owed Uncle George more than he got out of life, but being the gentle man that he was, you'd never have heard him complain. He was born in rural Noble County, educated in the Ligonier schools, taught briefly thereafter, and went off to serve in the Spanish-American War. He married his beloved "Billie", my Aunt Winnifred. She had been bitterly disappointed in her first marriage, likely intended to avoid matrimony thereafter, and only married again of her intense desire to have children of her own. She was perceptive enough to recognize the fine character and loving nature packaged in such a homely package as uncle George. A good choice.

But, no children graced their marriage, and they lavished their affection on their 10 nieces and nephews, me among 'em. Aunt Winnie did remark late in her life that had she known that she could not have children, she would never have re-married...an uncharacteristically flinty comment for her. They vacationed much and excitingly, it seemed to me, in such places as Petosky, Mich., Wisconsin, the Soo...with George's sister, Ollie and her husband, Enos Johnson of Goshen. And, they saved their money to build their dream home.

If Fate had made their marriage barren, it laid the second blow on them when it allowed the Depression and Crash to wipe out their savings...$15,000!!, which would have built their new home. When all of the dust had settled, they realized only about 10 cents on the dollar. They were both near the end of their working careers, with no chance of recouping. They ended their days on Dale Avenue, near the Miami community in SE South Bend. Their home seemed fine to us, living in low rent "digs" as we did; it was NOT the home of their dreams. Aunt Winnie had



the fine Austrian "Versailles" pattern china she had bought against a finer home prospect...good, solid furniture...fine linens (for she had been an employee of the Robertson Department Store in South Bend and had known and purchased quality).

Now, 47 years later, I can still hear his deep chuckle, smell his beloved pipes, hear him tell of his posting on Fernandina Island during the War, run my hands across his collection of wooden woodworking tools (He had been a cabinet maker for Singer Sewing Machine Plant in South Bend), and I can read his diploma from Ligonier High School (Academy) and read his child's autograph book:

"Forget thee? I'd as soon
Forget the dinner bell at noon,
And leave the turnips, meat and 'taters
To be devoured by hungry waiters!"

CHRISTMAS AS I KNEW IT

The Christmases I Never Had

'Tis Christmas Day, and I, the bachelor, sit in my "lonely" house, reinforcing the pathetic image of the "lonely bachelor". "Tis Christmas Day, and I'm going nowhere (pause for sympathetic sighs). **But, dear friends, it's of my own choice!**

I guess the pattern of my Christmases was established by my mother, as I was a wee bairn. Mother accepted a rather Draconian religious faith about 1930, and that faith forbid the celebration of traditional religious holidays. Father was a good man, but rather casual about religion, so Mother called the shots. (Oh, to be sure, she WAS a Christian...but recall, please, that the Pilgrims also celebrated ONLY Easter, and would have severely punished anyone making merry on Christ's birthday.) One can be a devout Christian without "Rudolph & Company". It's just a lot more fun that way, I guess!

> ...I guess the pattern of my Christmases was established by my mother...

Well, anyhow, as a result, Christmases weren't the same for us as for others. The rest of the world...even in that happy, less-commercial era...swung into a Christmas mood when the snows began to fall. There wasn't the orgy of advertising and "Mall-ing" then, but we knew **IT** was coming anyhow. School and church pageants would be in preparation, with the same dreadful results (I am totally intolerant of juvenile lisping and "cutsey-poo" children's programs! So there!). Some construction paper or colored hectograph paper atrocities would be taped up to the classroom windows. Eventually, there would be some sort of all-school program. (See Opus #3 and my number on Principal Della McGinnis teaching us "dic-tion" during the Harrison School Christmas caroling-around-the-tree.) Dismissal for a LOVELY, **TWO-WEEK** Christmas Vacation would follow!

In the two week period preceding the Holiday, one or two presents (from sturdy souls who disdained Mother's Puritanical point of view) would arrive...usually from beloved Aunt Winnifred; and once, in person, from Grandmother Rachel Stackhouse. Aunt Winnie's presents could be classified by the "Dylan Thomas, A Child's Christmas in Wales" method. "Presents were either clothing (dull) or useful (TOYS!)" Aunt Winnie, one of the single loveliest souls in God's Creation, sadly elected for things wooly and scratchy. (There is an eternal verity: the closer a garment is worn to a sensitive area [the neck, for example], the scratchier it will be! Sweaters were bad; scarves were a terror. Woolen underwear...I never received any, but I **SHUDDER** AT THE VERY THOUGHT!)

Grandma Stackhouse's visit...and present? A measly, insignificant handkerchief...or so I viewed it then. But, as I aged and thought, I realized that Grandmother Stackhouse was living off the meager remnants of the sale of her small farm...that she had 13 grandchildren in one family, 9 in a second family, and 4 in our family...**and that it is the love that makes the gift and the Season, not the money!** Twenty-six grandchildren (and four children and mates), and you have a very considerable expense. Just a 25 cent hankie for each of them and you are in for a lot...and in the depths of the Depression. Honestly, I cringe **now** at my attitude/feelings then; but sadly, she is in her grave some 60 years now and can never hear my tardy "Thank you, Grandma".

Was Father totally cowed by Mother's draconian Christmas? Not quite, no...She would have bent to the point of allowing a **couple** of chickens for the dinner. Then, amazingly, Father would come home with a TURKEY...an embarrassment of riches...and some navel oranges (They were a Holiday-only item then.) And, we would feast. (No, Mother did NOT make such a special effort, but with her cooking skills...common meals might have been regarded by others as a feast.) Her natural skills contravened her religious inclinations, in this case!

Christmas morning, or sometime during the day, I must "over" to a nearby friend's to inspect his Christmas swag. His parents were not as intense...or skilled...in parenting as mine; but Christmas presents they splurged on! A Daisy air rifle...sure! A new bicycle...sure! Clothes? Now really................! They understood childish desires, and "present-ed" accordingly. (But, I think that if I had been able to invite them to dinner at the Stackhouse's, they'd have met much, **much, MUCH** better cookin' than they'd ever get at home, surely the ultimate gift!)

And my friend, B. Y. Butler (living with parents and four brothers in the basement apartment at the Catholic Apartments up the block)? Likely a happy Christmas of much love, much Faith, and little money. They were Catholic...a faith that evoked extreme wariness from my mother...and so it would be sometime before I knew of their celebrations. That they went to Midnight Mass, I knew; what they did there...I had only Mother's negative speculations about this. They weren't "braggy" kids, so they didn't thrust their largesse at you. And anyhow, they all turned out so well as adults that you know they received the most cherished gift of all...a good raising.

By the time school rolled around again (after New Year's Day), most presents were forgotten. Oh, to be sure, the itches were eternal, they were! Oddly, no batteries had run down by then, 'cause nothing was battery-operated then! Not too many things were broken...none were plastic...a connection there? And, another Christmas began to fade on life's horizon (poetic flourish, there!)

Father and Sister Betty swam against the tide of Mother's faith until 1943, and DID decorate a Christmas tree at 364 West 7th...but always to Mother's disdain. The two older children married; I went off to War; the tree custom died. The few, tatty ornaments were kept in the attic for a few years, and then discarded. By '46, none of the children were any longer at home, and Father didn't really care THAT much.

40+ years went by, and Mother died in '87. Each year I had heard the carols (albeit those from a West 7th Street church nearly drove me batty with their volume). I saw the acceleration of commercialism and gritted my teeth. Then, Cousin Freida, (a "crafty" one if ever there lived one) demonstrated a cute small tree compounded of the detritus of society...coat hangers, masking tape, garland, and a string of wee lights. IT WORKED! We used **MY VERY OWN** coat hangers, with an appealing result. It is workable (doesn't dominate the room), practical (hooked up to my "clapper" switch), it is unexpected and merry, both, and it will be easily stored again for the third year.

"Do I feel disloyal to Mother?" Oh, come off it, now! She lived her life much as she wished...at least in later years. It's MY house, MY life, and MY Christmas now! Just keep the volume down on those "carols from the steeple"!

But, wait...does this all make Mother sound like a Heavy? Well, she DID accept some of Christmas as inevitable and "bow" to it. When her children persisted in giving her Christmas presents, she didn't "swim upstream". She came to quietly accept them. Hypocrisy? Hey, you don't know my Mama! Likely she thought of it as an Auxiliary Mother's Day! So there!

TAKING MAMA TO DINNER

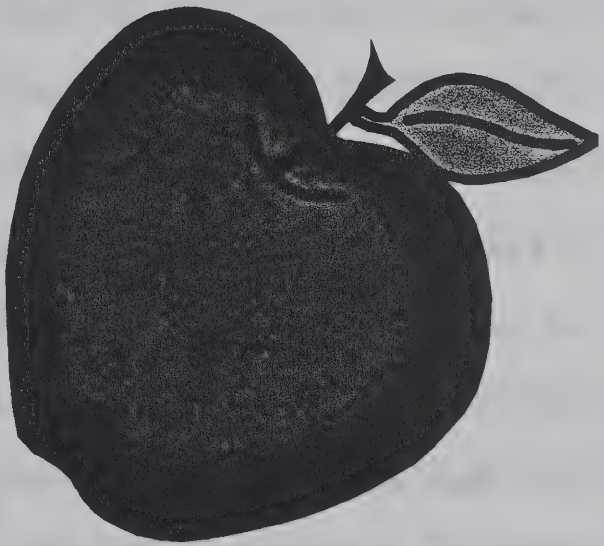
In the recent past, I assayed a cookbook, in which I put every memorable recipe that I could rememb-le (Notice that flashing wit?) In my hurry to get my contribution done (It was to have been an equal collaboration), I overlooked an area that at one time had gained me a (very) limited renown...the restaurant review. (In fact, a "lady" dropped me from the list of her friends for several years because I could not/would not serve as an unpaid reviewer on a fledgling "Ft. Wayne" magazine she was mid-wife-ing. Truly, I hadn't the exquisite tastes and frou-frou expression necessary to be a good reviewer, but those facts were lost on the lady.)

. . .Mother died in '87, and no more mortal meals pleased Mama. . .

But, I did know a little something about solid, ordinary, every-day foods and where to find them. And...they ARE solid,...but NOT SO ORDINARY or every-day as to make them a drug on the market. I came to categorize them as "meals-that-would-please-Mama"; and whenever my mother and I were afield antiquing or off to Aunt Winnifred's in South Bend, we'd seek out one of the few such places and dine. Mother died in '87, and no more mortal meals pleased Mama; but since then, a time or two I have found such Mama-meals, and I shall include them.

(Sorry, but it's not there anymore.) Walters Cafe in LaGrange, Indiana. Set in a tiny, chalet-like building at the junction of Indiana 9 and US 6, endowed with exactly 28 seats in the front two-thirds, an upstairs serving area and a full kitchen in the basement, remember this spot for its classic "chicken and biscuits" Saturday night supper. Chicken, boiled until rich and tender, picked carefully from the bone and kept hot and moist, one tremendous baking-powder biscuit, in halves; from-scratch mashed; beautiful clear-yellow chicken gravy, and assemble. Generous scoop of mashed in the middle of the oval platter (perfect round depression in it) flanked by biscuit halves. Over it all, ladle a generous serving of the picked-off chicken. Cover that with a generous coating of the gravy, and complete with a light accent of good paprika. Perfection on a platter!

And, everything they cooked had that same quality. Seared into my diet-stricken memory is their perfect baked apple, served in its skin, sitting on a small pool of it's own juices. The sauce was caramel; it cried out for a serving of cream with it. Sorry, no recipe. And...individual cinnamon-pecan rolls, baked "upside down" and served with the "goo of the gods" dribbling down their sides. Recipe...forget it; save that the dough had a substantial, bread-dough texture/toughness to it.



At Walters, Mother ate with enjoyment and complimented them on their food.....something that she did almost nowhere else in those days.

And, on Miami Avenue in East South Bend...Ciro's Hungarian Bakery and Restaurant. (No, we never ate there while Aunt Winnifred was alive, only two blocks away on Dale Avenue; but after she passed away in '62, we ate there several times during the settling-the-estate period.) For years afterward, I would drop in at Ciro's for a pre-game snack on a game day (but that didn't last for long, and neither did Notre Dame's attraction to me!) The significant memory? Ciro's breads, Ciro's sweet rolls, Ciro's stacked sandwiches with fresh-pack dill spears. Then, like so many good things, it mysteriously (to me) disappeared. A dill-pickle flavored memory, yes.

Any Auburn restaurants? Are you kidding!!! My mother? She DID envy, but **COULD OUT COOK** any of the local cooks. She knew and liked Dan and Bea Johnson of TeePee fame, but I never heard her laud their food. She knew of Jim Herzer and Roger Gordon of TeePee fame, but I doubt that she ever even tasted their viands...and at moments they were "Walters quality". In later years, I think that she conferred a recipe or two on Mayola Walters (no relation that I know), but I can't imagine that she ever sampled Mrs. Walters' cuisine. And Thimlar's, Herricks, Dad Shumans? Well, hey...she cooked there, and it would have been her own cooking she was endorsing (which she'd have been quite willing to do), but the premise of this article is "other people's" cooking).

I have to believe that she would have given her reluctant seal of approval to Yoder's of Hicksville, Bob's at Woodburn, the Waynewood (near Baer Field)...BUT NONE IN Garrett, Avilla, or Kendallville. To be sure, there are superior restaurants in these last three, but we're in the age of French frying, and deep-fat cookery and that would NOT have pleased her. Meats...chicken or round steak, pan-browned and then roasted (tight lid and a little moisture) steamed tender...that was her style. And, the pan gravy was elixir!

Of the above, Yoder's and Bob's would have made it on their pies, although Bob's does a good deal of deep-fat frying. She would have appreciated some of the Mennonite touch a la Gottfrieds of Garrett, but she never used sour cream in any recipe (But, hey...how much sour cream was there in cooking **in 1946** when she retired?...and I think that she looked for reflections of her own cooking techniques. No exciting foreign fripperies for her!)

How would she have fared with the Dutch Mill in Bluffton, or the Back 40 in Decatur? She'd have liked much of the former...especially the home-made pies. Of the latter, she'd not have understood the principle of the unlimited-quantity-but-limited-quality buffet. She prepared little that might be left to stand on a steam table for two or three hours. She served you what you needed; the Plagues of Egypt could eat elsewhere!

How would she have reacted to Auburn Diner food in later years. Not well, sadly. They were competitors, and she was **NOT** prepared to be magnanimous with the competition. She bore a grudging admiration for the management of the Temple Cafe...a fellow hard-working business WOMAN...but I never heard a compliment for the food (but then, I also doubt that she ever tasted Temple food after the late twenties when she cooked briefly for the celebrated

George Moore there.)

I am sorry that she cannot have tried out Peg Zehner's baked steak, the Railroad Inn's rhubarb pie, Vince's V & A Bread Pudding (Just fill my coffin with it when I die!), the St. James American fries with sautéed onions. And what a loss that she cannot have tried some of the truly great home recipes of some of my friends! But that's the other cookbook, isn't it?

Did she raise my tastes so high that they can never be satisfied? Oh, come now! I didn't get to be a svelte size 70 on "cuisine". Me for the greasy fried chicken, Hardee's preferably. Me for the cherry sundae, Azar's, if you please. Me for pizza, Pizza Hut preferred...or Oley's "foot-deep" pizza! Me for well-done prime rib, **ANYWHERE!** Me for Famous Fish of Stroh, basket full after basket full. Me for Sam's in Blakeslee and Dottie Vorndran's "magic-with-veggie-salad" at Town Tavern; and Shook's and some Hall's and...and...and. Oh, please understand, these are not anything but good restaurants, but **they do serve a lot of HIGH CAL, MUCHO FATTENING stuff,** and until recently I stood on overstrained arches to testify to it! Mama would not have approved of much of it, and my beloathed 1,000 calorie diet no longer allows it. But, I have my memories and still an excess of 125 pounds above the "ideal" weight. I will, in short, never completely return to those "viands", but I have loved, do love 'em anyhow! Like de song say, "I don't care what Mama doan "low, I goan eat that fried food anyhow...beginning about February of 1997!"

Footnote for a calorie-dodging smart aleck: "What about the original Hall's on South Fairfield?" "Well, yes, Mama did eat there a time or two (because she knew a waitress, one June Pomeroy, and she DID like the prime rib"......................."and Mrs. Aiken's Tea Room in St. Joe, c. 1940"...................."and Marvel's Cafe at the Dana?" "Well, it was 'ready, and plenty, and piping hot', and it did serve working men, whom Mother preferred as customers, and it pleased the Lions for **27 YEARS,** but a local cook...NOT!"...................."and Grace Krick's stint at the Auburn Rubber/Cooper Tire dining facility?"..."Local competition again!"................."and the local church's mincement?"..."Well, Mama regularly received a call from her beauty parlor operator, asking her to doctor the insipid recipe. [I understand they later came by a more laudable formula.] She would never have made **that** meatless wonder they turned out at the outset!"

SO...HUMOR ME PLEASE

“But, you're so witty!”, she said, further inflating my ego. I've heard this compliment a time or two; and in the wee, small hours of the night (when I have done a lot of my best [?] thinking,) it occurred to me that maybe...just maybe...I had something to offer on this subject. (Of the foregoing sentence, you will have to admit it would be a 'Lulu' to diagram, and it demonstrates pure chutzpah in its use of brackets and parentheses! Yeah!)

Well, anyhow...if I do have some skill as a humorist, what is it that I can do? I guess, like the celebrated baseball player, I can "hit 'em where they ain't". For, in a nutshell (suitable receptacle for humorists), humor consists of leading the listener/reader/viewer toward a logical conclusion, and then-not delivering the expected result.

It's: Asking them to add 2 + 2, then not letting the result be 4. (This, of course, poses a real danger to the humorist in our Age of Litigation: that an attorney will haul your derriere into court and prove to a jury, expensively, that his client suffered irreparable damage when the answer turned out to be either 3 or 5. (Purdue graduates [a contradiction of

> . . .Every bit of humor we were likely to hear was but a variation of one of those four jokes. . .

terms, if ever I heard one] will not see any humor in the foregoing example. 3 and 5 are familiar answers to them!)

A long, long time ago (before 1990, for youngsters [actually the fall of 1949]), I had the pleasure of hearing (and copying all the 'punch lines' of) R. Nelson Snider, celebrated humorist and Principal of South Side High School in Fort Wayne. He began his famous lecture, "The Anatomy of Humor", with a funny reference to the fee he was being paid for the talk. Considering the parsimony of the Lagrange County Superintendent who had "booked" him, even thinking of a generous fee was some funny! He regaled the audience with humorous examples of his four types of humor, and the point he so entertainingly made was: (ho, ho!) There were only four jokes. Four, mind you! Every bit of humor we were likely to hear was but a variation of one of those four jokes. O, how carefully I copied down his points...his punch lines. O, how careless I've been these 45 years to have lost them! But...I do remember some of his dicta. **"Never tell religious jokes...unless you carefully include every religion in the room in your jokes." (It is not being "made fun of" that offends, as much as being left out!)**...and...**"A joke DOES ***NOT***have to be mean, insulting, or painful to be funny."** (Sort of illuminates the psyche of someone who can tell only ethnic, racist, or biological jokes.) Oh, to be sure, I enjoy that kind of joke also, **But,** they're not my stock in trade, and you rarely hear me repeating one of them. (Hypocritical...maybe so!) **And, for God's sake, "REMEMBER YOUR PUNCH LINES!"** (The speech of the single greatest impact in my life was delivered by a Lt. Governor of Oklahoma, some 40 years ago, when he appeared to forget four consecutive punch lines before a very large after-dinner audience. He labored on through his speech, seemed to be surviving barely, but at the end returned to the same jokes; and this time, **he hit those punch lines like a ton of bricks.** The audience was in ecstasy (not a real feat, considering the amount of FREE California wine we had imbibed during the dinner!), for not only were the jokes funny and stunningly appropriate to his subject, but further, he had played a joke on US by leading us to feel SO sorry for the poor floundering speaker.

Gift to the reader: the four punch lines...............

1. "Oh sure, he was easy to sell. But you should have seen the fight his Leader Dog put up!"

2. "Heck, that's nuthin'. I usually get 7 or 8 out of a flock like that!"

3. "And he shouted, 'Remember the Alamo', and threw out three Mexicans!"

Let's see, four punch lines? (Is there a joke there, somewhere)

ADDENDUMB (addenda) to HUMOR ARTICLE

Some "bell-ringers"

1. "The Quaker and the Cow", but only if one is GOOD with an Oklahoma accent
2. "The Desk Sergeant and the Waif"
3. The "forgotten" Punchline Series
    A. Blind shopper
    B. Drunken duck hunter
    C. Plane in peril
4. Quadruple Puns
    A. "Rudolph, the Red-nosed Reindeer"
    B. "Barefoot Boy with Cheek of Tan"
5. "The Technical Bastard"

Do...Oh DO...remember that probably not one-half of your audience is going to catch the best of jokes!

Well, then, if I AM a humorist, how, modestly (a joke?) do I assess my own abilities? I think that it is, first of all, a joke that I be called a humorist. Surely you must have a sense of order...a firm idea of what would be suitable in a given situation, a sense of organization...to be able to "hit 'em where they ain't". If you had ever seen my 'filing system', my neat workroom, or gone spelunking through the caverns of my mind...you'd see the joke of it all. Organized is what I'm not! I cannot recall how many times I have carefully laid something in a place **WHERE I COULD NOT FAIL TO FIND IT EASILY,** and then spent days or weeks in frustration, trying to remember where I had put it! Most fortunate men have a wife to help them in this regard, and to maintain their social calendars and remember anniversaries and birthdays (and supply other services which Dr. Kinsey did not clearly explain to me!). Me? No. I am a bachelor, by choice. (And, six different women of DeKalb County made that choice!) I blunder along, muttering and profaning as I go. I KNOW that it WILL come to light...but not until it's need has abated or I have skated along the edge of cerebral meltdown.

Is cussing funny? Perhaps not in good taste, possibly blasphemous; but sadly, it can be funny. If the purveyor is of such lofty or such innocent stature that a bit of Billingsgate is startlingly unexpected, then it would be funny. See: Halloween generic joke, "You bwoke every #&%&* &#%$* cookie in the bag!" (Note the humor of a 71 year-old, "no-holds-barred" humorist shying away from saying "God-damned" in his punch line!)...Alternate juvenile punch line, "Don't cry? Hell, I'll sue!"

Sadly...humor isn't what it used to be. Gone are the charming ethnic and religious jokes (and NO, they were not viciously prejudiced!) "Parky" Parkyacarcas of Fred Allen's Show...or Mr. Kitzel of Jack Benny's Show...or "Mama MIA, attsa' some spicy pizza!"...and here comes the Anti-Hellenic/Anti-Defamation League/Italian-American Society to point out the grievous error of your ways. But, I digressed, did I not? If...IF**...IF...**I am a humorist, it is because I seem to have a well-developed sense of **WHAT OUGHT TO BE** in a given situation. And, the sneaky rebel in my soul causes me to often offer awful variations on the expected. I taught pretty well for three years (and "somehow" for thirty-one more), and I was in the business of delivering *****ORDER*****, along with the bard and the birds and the bees, grammatically speaking. My parents were Victorians, and they KNEW how the world ought to be! My parentage and my profession inclined me to order; I knew when it was being violated perniciously. I came to know how to violate it for beneficial effect, for the laugh is truly healthy.

Odd that any of said ability should have come from my parents! Life was pretty serious for them, most of the time. Oh, indeed, Mother told of kicking the checkerboard from between Father's knees when she caught him cheating, early in their marriage...but genuine subjects of laughter...very few. Father told of jokes played on others (I suspect, on him, too) at the factory; but I cannot remember him finding anything very funny. (Oh, they DID unconsciously funny things at times (Father and the "Lava-Soaped Chicken"); they told of funny things happening to others ("The Chef Bakes a Torte"); but they were not stand-up comedians, no. Once...just once...she sent me a funny card in which was suggested that I could improve my bowling scores by cheating! Slim pickin's for humor, were they not? But, they were mine parents, and I would not trade them for the Rockyfellers'!

But...what about dirty jokes...scatological items...off-color jokes? **(***REVELATION***) I like 'em!**...but not used as a weapon to deliberately embarrass folk whom I know would be deliberately offended by them. I do not care for the cruel joke, whether it be racial, ethnic, intellectual (Black, "Pollock", moron), or sexual. I claim the fine old Angol-Saxon trait of rooting for the downtrodden...not jumping on them with a nasty shot, thank you! Similarly, I'm adept enough with languages that I can accurately simulate a cleft palate, infantile preservation, stuttering, excessive sibilance, nasality. I will admit to having used them for humor, as have I used regional accents. **But, I am ashamed to have stooped to demean some group with them.**

Does all of the foregoing make me sound impossibly moral...hypocritical? I suppose so; count it as the price of my acquaintance, and pay the price as you will, or no!

And...I'm not really that fond of "fat man" jokes anymore, either. (I once endured five or six of the foregoing by the featured speaker while seated on stage at a high school graduation. I'm sorry that I don't believe in Hell...**I'd like someplace to send that guy!**)

Now...does that mean that I can't take a joke on myself? Nah, Bunky...if they are really in good humor. But, I reserve a special place in that speculative Hell for two characters with whom I once bowled. They told deliberately insulting "fat man" jokes, and they meant them! But, there are some things that are funny, and true about me that I **CAN** endure. I have enjoyed, believed, and exemplified Montgaigne's observation that "...old men can remember everything except how often they have told you something!" I did sit down once, after a speech, and miss the chair...and it's funny to me...NOW, 55 years later! I can appreciate the ridiculous situations I have gotten myself into, at times. I can appreciate the humor of someone as spectacularly large (as I used to be) doing or trying things customarily reserved to the svelte and agile. Couple that with a lust for exaggeration (I got it!), and you may have me doing the limbo under the Golden Gate Bridge.

But anymore biting fat-man jokes, and I'll treat you like a liberal in the court of King Canute Gingerich!

Well, hey! I didn't hear any defense of MY wounded sensibilities when that nerd told the five or six "fat-man" jokes at the St. Joe Commencement in 1952, and I survived. (But then, maybe, I heard so few "fat-man" jokes because, as the man said, "He stropped his tongue on both sides each morning!" [Have your Grandfather explain the reference to you.] I usually could get in the last words, and a few of them far enough over the insulter's head that it enhanced his honest inferiority complex.

Do I see any humor today that I can truly enjoy? Oh, sure, I like some of the political satire, particularly of Mark Russell; and to a lesser degree, Dennis Miller. I like Whoopee Goldberg...when she isn't trying to "out-smut" the boys. I like Roseanne, not because her character is in any way appealing, but because her house looks so much more honest than Donna Reed's used to...if they could just re-title it, "Father Knows Beast!". I vastly enjoy English comedy...the rollicking slapstick of "Are You Being Served?", and the forever recurring plot line of "Keeping Up Appearances [Hyacinth's Weekly Downfall]". And, of course, in closing (I'll bet you thought I'd never get to it, either!), Who, O Who, would not respond to the rollicking humor of Julia Child's adventures in wine cellar and kitchen and wine cellar and wine cellar? Long may her liver survive!

A game we used to play: When the English Literature Class had been particularly productive on Hamlet, then we'd play **"Re-Cast the Classic".** You tried to make the most improbable casting of the play you could, using current entertainment or political personalities. To wit:

Hamlet---Don Knotts, John Candy, Danny DeVito!

Ophelia---Phyllis Diller, Rhea Perlman, Bette Midler

Madonna, Barbra Streisand, Demi Moore

Gertrude---Whoppie Goldberg, Demi Moore, Carole Channing

Claudius---Arnold Schwartzenegger, Sylvester Stallone, Elton John

Polonius---Andy Griffith, Buddy Ebsen, Ray Walston

Gravedigger---Madonna, Barbara Streisand, Prince

Try your hand at it. See if you can't do worse!

HUMOR ME -- PART TWO

My God - He's Endless!

There are some very real cautions that must be observed by the budding comic, lest some cultural horticulturist prune you right out of existence.

1. Know your audience. It is absolutely true that half of your listeners/readers will miss the point/humor of even your best-told/written jokes. Compounded by booze and noise, it's a wonder that anyone even grunts when you get to the laugh line. Keep it at least as simple as you think your audience wants it, or even more so. (And make it a Hell of a lot plainer than that last sentence!) Do not cast your clever double-entendres among the non-literate. (You cannot get off good literary jokes to someone whose idea of good lit is "Dick and Jane". You may know the most enchanting triple pun or two, you'll never get a chance, in an ordinary world, to tell them!) See: "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer"; "Barefoot Boy pun" [a quadruple pun!].

...Do not cast your clever double-entendres among the non-literate...

2. Know your audience, Part the second. Taste is everything. Only a total boor will deliberately offend the helpless and innocent to push a smutty story. (Once I knew a **BOOR** who delighted in ambushing lady

teachers with offensive jokes in the teachers' lounge. I suspect that his life was prolonged, as he had contracted a wasting illness, by the fact that neither the Lord nor the Devil cared to deal with him in the Hereafter!)

3. Know your audience, Part the Third. Are THEY ready for jokes? Most after-dinner audiences have the perceptively of a herd of cows. When your humor and the meatloaf and/or "Tuna Surprise" compete for their attention, the stomach will win every time. Keep it simple, friend. And, observe please...even when you think you've got 'em, half of them are laughing because they don't intend to be caught not laughing, EVEN THOUGH THEY DIDN'T "GET" THE JOKE AT ALL!

4. Avoid "topping" your listeners. Like ME, you may have a "keyed memory": you know scads of jokes, stretching back into the misty past, but they don't come to mind until SOMEONE ELSE first tells a joke; then you "top" them, to little thanks. Little...**but LITTLE love does this win for you!**

5. Avoid the cruel joke...or if you **MUST, just MUST** tell it, make yourself the butt of it, rather than someone helpless...like a minority of your listeners. Otherwise, your listener may quickly become an enthusiastic volunteer of a dwindling minority...your friends. But somewhere earlier, I expressed regret over the passing of the ethnic joke. Were they not cruel, insensitive, mindless? Not on your tintype, dearie! Not as they were told in my youth...not as they were meant. They more demonstrated the humor, the warmth, the humanity of the Pole, the Italian, the Jew...and heaven save me from the NAACP, the Negro/Black/Person-of-Color/African-American. We **could** and **DID** enjoy the humor of Mammy in "Gone With the Wind". It was not with some evil sense of superiority that we saw the Negro house servant/butler pursue the last chicken for Ashley

Wilkes' dinner in falling Atlanta...the situation was just plain funny (to all, except the rooster). Maybe Butterfly McQueen WAS a characature (as was Stephen Fetchet, I guess), but only the Strom Thurmonds of this world would contend she was typical of Negroes.

And, hey! Telling that joke on yourself...telling it well...may forestall someone else telling one about you. Clever!

6. Hey! Good taste is good taste! Some jokes will **NEVER** be appropriate, like medical jokes at the dinner table. I recall a respected physician commenting on the frequency of bowel-function conversations at the local senior citizens center, **while we were attending a pancake breakfast.** No, no! "Sophisticated", or anatomically correct jokes in the presence of children (who wouldn't understand, anyhow), or anyone easily offended by your superior knowledge of biology? No, no! And, yes...or rather **"No, no!"**, to strongly partisan political "gems" in the presence of a neutral or opposite party.

And "black" humor? ("Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how did you like the play?)

And blatantly stolen/adapted humor-without-attribution? "Take my wife, please!"

And...und...it...y...&...? Is a big subject, yes?

Test: Item from morning paper, 12/27/95: "Tomatoes May Be good for Prostate". Have you seriously considered how difficult it would be to apply a ripe tomato to most prostates?

1. In clinically correct terms, tell what is funny about the item.

2. Identify its suitable, unsuitable audiences.

3. Re-design the joke (if it be so) to make it applicable to a prolapsed uterus.

4. Tell the joke, in an acceptable way, to a variety of audiences.

5. Arrange bail, legal defense, relocation.

6. Go out of humor business.

AN OLD CODGER, REVISITED

Three years, now, my old friend, Silas Teddy "Ted" Walters has been gone ...but the memories of him hardly dim at all. While running through some interview notes about Ted recently, I found that there was much more about this remarkable man that could be told. To wit:

Ted was there for the "arrival" of cars in Auburn, and national life. "Your first car?"...a Dodge touring car, given to many flat tires (They all were then!) If you went more than 20 miles without having to change a tire, you considered yourself lucky. Many of the cars came with multiple mounts for spare tires...a mount on each fender, and sometimes two spares strapped to the backside! The first "Ted" car was a right-hand drive...as were many then, except the Ford.

> ...I found that there was much more about this remarkable man that could be told...

Broken arms were a badge of ownership, due to hand-cranking and whipback of the crank. and, Ted told of having a viciously split thumb and forefinger, the result of such a whipback, throwing his hand into a sharp license plate. The offending vehicle there was a REO, named for R. E. Olds, the company owner. (What interesting names then!) Duryea ...Maxwell ...Kiblinger ...Apperson...Duesenberg...names of personality and romance! No "Belchfire 8's", few animal-attributes (but hey...the Stutz Bearcat?) very few "synthesized" names such as the Miata, the Corolla, or the Honshu hara-kiri!!!!

The recreations of the day? To the movies, at the Court, baseball in any non-frozen season, the Smart, the Empire...tickets sold by Leah Little, 10 cents each..."silents", (Wm. Fornam, Gish sisters, Ramon Navarro, Theda Bara, the Barrymores) accompanied by piano, violin, and eventually, organ...or...***Band Concerts***on the Square, Thursday nights, two hours, a large band led by "Pres" Wilcox...on a rolling bandstand, **and for 30 to 40 years!** A genuine "silver coronet" band, yes!

....a Big shopping Night---SATURDAY...**Stores open 'till 10:00-11:00 PM,** really big crowds patronizing Hebel's Grocery, Nebelung's Shoe Store, Schaabs, McBride's, Hoff's Market, Clement & ________'s Grocery (but Ted couldn't remember EVERYTHING!)

...the popcorn stands

...Wible's, Penland's, Town's, and another "a bag of corn for a nickel", with "butter" and sometimes (for kids?) a generous scoop of redskin peanuts on it!

...and watering troughs at every town entrance, but particularly one at Main and Washington in North Auburn.

...and the first radio (Rol Muhn bought the town's first console radio, a Crosley, complete with earphones and the ability, under favorable conditions, to reach KDKA in Pittsburgh and WLS in Cincinnati...but

SCRATCHILY!

...and his first restaurant meal--Dan Hericks, at the Walton Travel Agency location

...and chewing tobacco IN SCHOOL!...but Beware! The teacher was as likely to give you a smart rap on the back, making you swallow the bollus (and usually making you deathly ill in the process) as he was to "whale the daylights out of you!" And, once "whaled", you concealed the fact from your parents, since most of them would have matched Charley Krise's discipline with the same treatment at home, rather than hiring a lawyer!

A BIRTHDAY HAPPENING

In a lovely, bygone age when tranquillity and gentility seemed to be the watchwords of society, there occurred in Hicksville one frantic afternoon that confounded its ambiance: Cousin Louise's Birthday Party.

Cousin Louise was the perfect young lady...at least as measured against her younger sister, Cousin Bea. Cousin Louise was 7 years older, which made being a lady a rather easier task for her than for poor Cousin Bea. Some parents have the disgusting habit of using older siblings as models for the younger, and doubtless exaggerating their perfection. Poor Cousin Bea had felt the sting of such odious comparisons, and probably felt it all the more for the fact that there was at least some small amount of truth to it. Father had been married twice, the second time at 44 to a 22 year old young lady. Cousin Bea was the third child of his second set and much the junior to the other two. She was a certain trial to her mother, who doubtless KNEW that the Lord had used much too much ginger in her compounding. Additionally, she had been allowed to play down at the poultry business (her father's source of the income that he so foolishly

. . .Some parents have the disgusting habit of using older siblings as models for the younger, and doubtless exaggerating their perfection. . .

gambled away at pasteboards), and the workmen enjoyed teasing her into juvenil displays of temper. Gingery, indeedy, Cousin Bea!

A lovely summer's day...the date of Perfect Louise's Birthday Party. The dining table was covered with pristine linen, and a beautiful birthday cake occupied its focal point. Chandelier overhead. All would be perfection; and to assure that point, Cousin Bea had specifically and emphatically been disinvited.

Bea has seen the preparations. She was rather bright, and she felt the sting of omission keenly. She sat on the curb, there on High Street, seething in social purgatory. Flaming (if temporary) juvenile hatred permeated her nature.

And then, kind (for Bea), malevolent (for Louise and Mother), fate took a hand. Up High Street came the common conveyance of the day, a horse and buggy. Nature called, the horse responded and Bea recognized *O*P*P*O*R*T*U*N*I*T*Y. She darted into the street, cupped the "instrument of revenge" in her hands, and slipped into the dining room. She seated the "object" (a delight to a gardener at the correct moment, but not really intended for dining room tables) on the pristine white table cloth, next to the lovely cake.

How soon thereafter her mother discovered it, I cannot say. But, as the tale was told to me, Mother had no trouble identifying the author of such disgusting mischief. She was not a cruel woman by nature, but the circumstances pushed her envelope of tolerance. She seized a fairground whip and prepared to show Poor Bea the error of her ways. Raised in the air for the first strike, the lash trailed through the chandelier, became ensnared, and brought it crashing onto the table, the "road apple", and the birthday cake. I think the sheer enormity of the events must have overwhelmed her, for it was never related to me that Bea suffered any lasting consequences of mere mischief.

Cousin Bea grew onward to womanhood, helped to nurse Sister Louise when she died of cancer in the 30's, similarly nursed her father when he died in the early 50's, and nursed her mother when she passed away in the 60's. It should have earned her kind and loving care in her old age. Sadly, it didn't. She died alone in a second-rate nursing home. It ought to be said, however, that she retained the impassioned nature and the waspish temper into her old age, and truly, no hired help could deal with her for any extended period.

Those of us who had known her missed her.....still do.

What more?

Cousin Bea paints the pigs

Cousin Bea's spotless oven

L'INTERLUDE POETIQUE

To the Cat, Defecating in My Garden

"You there! With the spiky tail
With the provocatively arched spine;
I know what it is you do there, for
*I have seen you p**p among my pansies...*
*I have seen you d******e in my delphiniums...*
*I know thee to have s**t in my Shasta daisies...*
Well, do I know thee!
----------But-----wait------------------------
Why do we not declare a truce, for...
I would see thee given thy proper place...
Say...like among the strings of the Cleveland Symphony!
Yes!

(foregoing selection to be delivered 'molto furioso')

"Cute, Woodland Creatures"

It was 'Chuckie Woodchuck', indeed, until.....
The fur-bearing s*n-of-a-b***h
Ate off
Two whole Japanese balloon flowers
Two long rows of bush beans
A multitude of garlic plants
Belched..........
And looked around for some serious eating.
Well, trundling home to her burrow under Agnes Beuret's porch,
She was hit by a brick fragment, flung by the jerk next door
(His only good act in three years of neighboring).
She did not return, and was soon deservedly cyanide-d in her burrow.
The nasty neighbor moved away; and I?
I no longer think Punxatawney Phil is cute.
I hope they wake the hungry little S.O.B. 367 days a year!

*Sanitized for your Protection

A HOOSIER LOOKS AT HICKSVILLE

I cannot advise you to arrive in Hicksville, Ohio, either in early morning or at sunset. You'd find, should you do so, that the sun does not seem to rise in the proper east, nor does it set in the west...at least not for me, it doesn't!

(I have reached the conclusion that this geographic wonder is the result of confusion brought about by switches and turns in almost all roads leading into Hicksville, the more compounded by the diving of Ohio 18 under the railroad underpass on the "west" side of town (my most common approach angle).

I am easily bemused/confused/disoriented. I find that High Street doesn't run an honest north-south, and I see nothing "high" about it, other than the sunny spaciousness of the business district. Edgerton Street doesn't seem to have much to do with that "flower of Williams County"; and come to think of it, I have never been able to find the five or six corners...or whatever...of the Cemetery north (?) of town where many of my ancestors are interred.

. . .the sun does not seem to rise in the proper east, nor does it set in the west. . .

But, I kinda like the place, 'cause:

1. There's no waitin' for trains, as you'd find to your exasperation in Garrett, Auburn, or St. Joe. I cannot imagine such a boon of foresight as to elevate the train tracks,

especially in the 1870's when the B&O first penetrated these parts. The hours NOT spent waiting for trains since then would make a very appealing lifetime.

2. There's an in-town Fairground. I'm "taken" by the nostalgic charm of a permanent fairground, especially when I note the establishment and failure of at least two in my own county. Additionally, it has a romantic personal charm to me, for it was there that my Mother ordered a rendezvous at the merry-go-round with her new beau...(she 16 at the time), that led within a year to their marriage...and within ten years, to total parental achievement (me!). And the sporting bonus: a grandstand and a track, graced of summers by harness racing. Now, I am sure that Hicksville doesn't see many Little Brown Jug or Hambletonian winners, but it's still a lovely bit of nostalgic '90's (1890's, that is) charm. I've seen such "wonders" as the Wyandott County Fairgrounds (I have the splinters from their grandstand to prove it!)...and even the local splendor of the Noble County Fairgrounds in Kendallville...but they just aren't Hicksville. No siree!

3. 'Cause those places in #2 above aren't spangled with MY relatives, places of business on both ends of High Street (albeit a few years ago), with a creamery tucked in the middle. Spangled with Hinschs, Teagartins, Osmuns, Humbargers, Stackhouses, and scads more ...Onstotts and Diesingers and Snyders. And, if any of those names ever appeared on police blotters, it was certainly a well-kept

family secret.

And, when earthly spell was cast off, they went to the quiet glade on the west side or the sunny calm of 6 Corners, except for a few (like Johnny Stackhouse, 1818-1891), who awaits eternity in the Farmer Cemetery.

All told, Hicksville isn't too bad a spot to await Eternity.

BUT, there are some mysteries too for the shallow-knowledged outsider.

1. Where does the water come from' where does it go to? I don't remember any rushing streams nearby...no great reservoirs. I know that once, about September of '72, they had a 7" rainfall in one evening, and THEN they had running water...reputedly going in one door and out the other of the Hicksville Elementary School! But, ordinarily, no rushing streams. But, where does the town send its waste water? "Town?" Yep...I only hear "exempted village" when they make school announcements.

2. Who initiated the "great exchange"...an Auburn girl to marry a future Hicksville Mayor, a Cherry of Butler traded for an Iva Scheuring; a Bill Jones traded for a Paul Thomas; and a good Manchester star, one Stan Pepple, cut in an outright deal? And, two journalistic luminaries...Auburn's latest gift to Hicksville literacy, while you sent us implement dealers, wedding arrangers, and dairy executives?

3. How did the "watering spot" on Ohio 18 become the obligatory "rite of passage" for so many Indiana youth, who chose to take alcoholic advantage of the differing ages of "consumption" in the two states...to the eventual prosperity of the tavern owner and morticians?

And in this discursive wonder, what may I have missed (that must be mentioned before I depart the paper?) Why, it's back to

High Street again, to remark how splendidly it blossoms out in the business district. (Hey-oo, we have whole towns here in DeKalb County that aren't as wide as High Street alone.) When I first saw that street more than 60 years ago, it seemed an immensely long walk to get from one side to the other...even with the charm of that confectionery on the corner of High and Main. Such coconut haystacks...such chocolate covered peanuts!

And, a farewell salute to High Street by remarking on the scrumptious spinach salad (sometimes available), and the devastating (as on a diet) pies. If you don't know where to find them YOU know less about Hicksville than I do!

So there!!!!

LAYERS AND LAYERS OF NONSENSE

As a callow youth (and boy, was I ever callow!), I rather fancied myself to have a rapier-like wit. Perhaps half-right, there? I could toss off the sharpest of mal-mots (Isn't that the opposite of a bon-mot?). It is rather likely that I was a prime example of the need for retroactive birth control; but on I went...offending any and all with my juvenile barbs. I would like to suggest that the ensuing 50+ years have mellowed my sense of humor/humus (?)...but once in a while, a disquieting flashback.....

So it was recently when a dear friend sent me a clipping about the lady-artiste in Iowa who was going to execute (word **VERY** carefully chosen) a copy of Grant Wood's "American Gothic" in something like 500 pounds of creamery butter! I suppose the Iowa State Fair, or some other such artistic victim, was to be scene of this artistic tour-de-farce. Think of it! The horse-faced lady and her mournful husband, replete with inverted pitchfork and gothic window in the background...and all in butter-by-Tiffany's (or have you priced butter lately?)

> ...The idea was, from the current world of celebrity/notoriety, to pick the worst possible cast for the play...

Well, then, Gentle Readers, the teenager (never really far from control of my mind) began "theme and variations" on the foregoing.

1. Cast your imagination on an "Elizabeth Taylor", done appropriately in cellulite!

2. Give your artistic livers up to a "W. C. Fields", done in frozen daiquiris!

3. I personally fancy a "Lawrence Welk", done in over-ripe limburger cheese (How **does** one tell if limburger **is** over-ripe?)

4. Maybe...a "Don Rickles", in clotted bile?

5. A "Zsa Zsa Gabor", done in industrial strength Oil of Olay and iron filings?

6. Roll your own!

It's not as though I haven't gotten on such a "substitution bent" before. Once, in ages past (when I labored in the Vineyards of Education), I **even USED TO ENCOURAGE MY INNOCENT STUDENTS (!)** to play such a game. If and when we had a good study unit on one of the Shakespearean classics, we'd take a "day-off" after the big test and play at "Miscast the Classic". The idea was, from the current world of celebrity/notoriety, to pick the worst possible cast for the play. (Oh, I know that this is not very "big apples" nowadays...see Demi Moore in Scarlet Letter, surely more damaging to Hawthorne than any critic ever was!), and you KNOW that Hollywood and television do it all of the time! But, we slogged bravely ... ludicrously ... onward!

HAMLET: The Fair Ophelia...Phyllis Diller or Carol Channing? Pontificating, old Polonius: Don Knotts? Troubled Queen

Gertrude: Rosie O'Donnell? Loyal-Friend Horatio: Andy Griffith (Ah, I can hear it now, with slathery Southern accent, "Gooood Naaaaght, Sweet Prince. Flats uv ain-jells sing you-all to thaaay raist!" And Hamlet himself?......your treat!

JULIUS CAESAR: Marc Anthony, for a funeral oration...just any politician, currently running for office! Caesar himself...either of the current major Presidential candidates, giving a telling reading of the "I am as fixed and unmoving as the north star!", line. If they can keep their faces straight on that line...and anyone believes them...then let them be elected! Faithful wives, Calpurnia and/or Portia...who but Madonna or Ivana Trump? Conniving Cassius...with "the lean and hungry look"...Richard Simmons? The Soothsayer ("Beware the Ides of March!")...any Sunday morning political pundit. And Loyal Brutus (last to stab Caesar)...any politician who has ever said, "I'm 100% behind him!"

Well, by now, you've sorta' got the idea. Try such mischievous play on advertising slogans...casts of TV shows...important government offices...or even at the next family reunion. Think what YOUR family could be if you could substitute, say---just any Rockerfeller, for a no-good uncle! It "do" just boggle the mind, unless you have a very high "boggle threshold"! ...Unlike I/me.

MY HOUSE BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD

A few years back, an honored, old gentleman of my acquaintance went to his eternal rest...not an uncommon event for someone of my acquaintance---or age! (I sometimes used to call my mother's attention to the age of her own children with the remark, "We're all old enough to die!" Mama's reaction was emphatic...sort of "None of that stuff for children of mine!"

Well, anyhow, I knew...I **know...that we are mortal,** and (an older sister proved it four years back.)...and anyhow, I was much flattered when the bereaved family asked me to be a part of the funeral service, and to read two of the departed gentleman's favorite poems...Bryant's "Thanatopsis" and "the House by the Side of the Road".

The latter selection comes often to mind to me, now, as I sit on my front porch, partaking of one of the few advantages of living on West Seventh Street. I take a good deal of pleasure from sitting on my formerly-overworked porch swing and watching the world pour by my door. Even considering the free, shortened-lifetime-by-carbon-monoxide-gas (a gift of the many passing motorists), it's still interesting. I have always claimed to be

. . .I knew...I know...that we are mortal. . .

bored by mathematics and statistics, yet I DO find it interesting to conduct personal surveys of passing traffic. "What proportion of 4-door, full-sized sedans, as compared to all other vehicles?" "How many Lincoln Town Cars in a given period of time?" "How many vehicles can clear a single change of the Indiana Avenue stoplight (10 to 15 in non-rush times, up to 25 a change in rush hours [11 to 1 PM, noon rush; 3-6 PM, afternoon rush]. And, during ACD, "How many classics, and of what pedigree?" "Bring on your Jaguars...my dream car! I am prepared to sniff at Mercedes, upto and including the 500 series. I know what a Rolls or a Bentley is, but 'Ho hum', anyhow!" But a lovely old L-29 Cord...a boat-tailed speedster of any make...a gorgeous old, "Remington Steele" white Packard convertible!...or a finely, lovingly restored old Ford, preferable Model A or older! Well, my taste is eclectic...just let it be something besides the modern, "off-the-rack", "melted-ice-cream-styled" Detroit detritus.

What else besides the blur of passing traffic and the accents of distinctive motors? Friends, that's what! Now, for a very long time, I could not sit on my porch without receiving the profane salutes of former "Stackhouse dodgers", school-aged motorists who had been too cowardly to ever take my courses, but found a kind of "hit-and-run" bravery to shout selected obsenities from a moving vehicle! Gradually, their vulgarity wore itself out, and I lost track of most of them, although I do read the police blotter each Monday to see which of them have further "distinguished" themselves!

No, the friends I refer to are the good people who seem to have delighted in my annual crop of elephant ear plants, and in my frequent presence in the beloved porch swing. They pass: they honk, they wave. Early on, after my retirement, I would not look up and acknowledge them...irked, you would guess, at the passing profaners, and unwilling to take a chance that it was they who "saluted" me. But, as time went on, I came to again pay attention to the honks and waves, and...even though I frequently cannot identify them immediately...I do enjoy them. "It's not rudeness if I don't acknowledge you". Put it down to failing reflexes, failing eyesight (not really!), and the tendency to get so focused on something that I cannot shift my attention quickly enough. If you like the elephant ears, so do I; and I'm pleased to grow them for your pleasure, also...and did you know that I have dozens of them to give away each spring?---**if you will simply call and pick them up. [I NEVER remember to whom I have promised them,** and I won't be put to bookkeeping to keep a list of possible donees.]

Other "porch-watching trivia"...the sort of 'self-conscious' look of people who walk by with YOU looking at them from the porch...the varying degrees of civic responsibility of people "walking" their dogs [when Towser makes a 'deposit' on someone's lawn]...**the TRESPASSING buzz of people driving down MY DRIVEWAY,** [having ignored a "dead end" sign and a "do not enter, no exit" sign to get there]...

And then...then...then there's the seasonal, "Dandelion Delight". In Berke Breathed's late lamented comic strip, "Bloom County", there is the character, Opus, the Penguin, who delights in dandelions. Call me "Opus"! I think they're sprightly, and a welcome sign of spring (to me, at least). My lawn, in proper season, is spangled in yellow! Ah, indeed, I know that to the right of me, across the street for three consecutive lawns, and to the left of me for three lawns ...dandelions are an anathema. But here, at 364, there is an oasis of non-conformity and glowing yellow. Not only are they, to mine eyes, beautiful; they are cover. A few years ago, my terminally industrious next -older-sister and her husband offered to apply weed killer for me in the spring. "Hey-oooooo....if it weren't for the "weeds", as you fancy them, there'd be nothing at all on that patch of ground!" "Just call it 'Hubert's low-tech, appealingly (appallingly?) natural lawn."

...and before you take the considerable risk of disparaging MY sense of beauty, recall that **I was the originator,** in my part of town, of: Jewels of Tibet, elephant ears, Japanese balloon flowers, California petunias, six different colors of rose of Sharons, moon flowers, and other vanity-producing species...not to mention three varieties of pampas grass!

My, but this is all a long way from the porch swing, suddenly!

Well, anyhow, the passing parade of life delights me...even with its tendency to dump ash trays on my lawn and to play their car stereos like a cannonade. I shall, like departed friend Lehr Wilder, "sit in my house by the side of the road, and be a friend of man[kind]"...at least most of them!

Honk, wave as you pass by, or stop on the porch for a chat!

MAMA'S ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

Everyone's mother is...or sadly...was remarkable, including mine! This is not to say, however, that they must all have been stamped out of the same mold. Everyone's mother is/was remarkable, but with charming variations.

My mama, for instance. Please observe, I could never directly address her as "Mother", of "Ma" or "Maw". Not for her the erudite and pretentious "Mater". Sometimes slangily, I could call her "Toots", or "Sweetie", and she endured it. But, after her death in 1987, I came more and more to remember her as "Mama".

What attributes did she share with all other mothers? I should think the love of children was a universal trait, and I am sure WE put as much strain on that trait as most children would and do, from dreadful time to dreadful time. She, however, could spend less time with her children than most mothers of the 1930's...she was one of the early "working mothers". A funny term when you consider the amount of work all mothers were expected to do just within the home! Mama was, you may know, a superb cook. For nearly 25 years, she cooked professionally, culminating

...I should think the love of children was a universal trait...

with owning her own restaurant. Interestingly, within that single, city block, there were two of these remarkable women...good cooks, restaurant proprietors, mothers. And...and...even though the mothers were much away from home, their children's' names did not appear on the police blotters or probation records!

When mother could be at home, she did vary from type. She was not a happy housekeeper. Adequate, but not enthusiastic. I have always attributed this to her being forced to domestic work when we first came to town in November, 1924. With four children and debts of their bankruptcy to clear up (One took fully 13 years, but it was paid!), she felt forced to do cleaning and cooking for others. When it became possible for her to pay anyone else...became necessary to hire someone else because of her restaurant work schedule...she did employ domestics. I can recall at least two ladies who did laundry for us, both within our house. I recall one comfortable old, grandmotherly type, with a touch of timid larceny about her. They would be a rich subject in themselves.

There were other...many other...interesting traits that mother had, not the least of which was her religious intolerance. She had been a member of St. Joe's **prominent** church as a girl, but a distressing combination of circumstances soured her on that faith...she heard her father preached to Hell in his funeral sermon, and what she felt to be his intended inheritance ended up in a foster brother's hands and went to pay for the stained glass window in the west wall of the sanctuary. Scratch one church!

She tried another church in the early days in Auburn, that of one of her sisters. I don't really know why it didn't jell for her, but by 1931, she had become a member of a fundamentalist, strongly evangelical faith...one that has come knocking on your door at some time or another. She was baptized in 1931, and it remained the faith of her choice for the next 56 years, nearly.

That faith was, as are many newly-minted faiths, endowed of the idea that they alone were God's chosen people, and the ONLY avenue to salvation. They particularly disdained the Roman Catholic and Lutheran faiths; and particularly excoriated the former for its rigid hierarchical structure, as they saw it. It was always a subject of amusement to me that they adhered to just as strict a heriarchial arrangement in their faith as they criticized among Catholics.

Well, as the year advanced, the promised Armageddon either did not appear, or, was for one reason or another delayed. Mama's intolerance was, for selected individuals, relaxed. Her Catholic daughter-in-law became a trusted business agent for her...unbelievably 30 years before! Several Catholic friends of mine were even granted Mama's conditional approval for salvation.

Me and Mama's faith? We had our battles early on, as she tried to coerce me to attend supposedly voluntary church services. She had explained "free will" in a moment of weakness, and I bought into it vigorously. It struck me as hypocritical to tell the child that he had free will and then to rule that he were free only to stay in his bedroom if he did not wish to attend the Bible study class in the living room! For such, or what ever reasons, none of her children REALLY accepted her faith, although an older sister did become a member of her congregation, because of marriage to a member.

I suppose that this may all be of moderate interest, but what of that title? Well, it came about thisaway'. To Mama, the high point of the religious year was **NOT** Christmas. Her faith was rather Puritanical in some aspects, and like the original Puritans, did NOT celebrate anyone's birthday, including Our Lord Christ's. (Among the Puritans of Massachusetts, you would have been sternly admonished or punished for doing so!) Mama's faith identified itself with some of the aspects of faith, including the celebration of the Last Supper, which they chose to call the Memorial. In late winter, there came to be a sense of anticipation...particularly among the elderly. For, you see, not all members of the congregation could partake of the communion, as it were. Only the oldest members, those known as the Remnant, actually participated. Mama was of the Remnant, a fact of almost-quiet pride to her. There would be a flutter of preparation...the best of clothes consistent with their disdain for earthly materialism that is...the proper "altar" cloth, the proper wine vessel and glasses...and attendance, even in the shadow of death!

As Mama had grown older and less mobile, she came to have contact with ordinary functions of the faith only through her Tuesday evening Bible study classes in our living room, **but...BUT, for Memorial, she made a monumental effort to attend. Now...NOW, THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT COMES IN!**

For it came to pass, in those last years of her life, the funeral home next door changed hands, and it came to be managed for its new owners by a fine lad, albeit a **Catholic!** He and Mama hit it off just fine, and when he was informed of the looming Memorial...and noting Mama's lack of mobility, he offered a wheelchair and the massive gray funeral limousine, with all the help it should take to get her in and out. Mama was practical, she was. She was also flattered, she was. It did not take much consideration for her to accept. (Mama "cottoned-up" to big cars, anyhow!)

Well, came the Thursday night of Memorial that March, and the limousine drew up in the driveway. Into the house came dear good friend, Doc Trausch...a bonafide Catholic; Craig Taylor of McComb-Dilgard-Cline, another bonafide Catholic...**and two more sturdy helping hands...ALL CATHOLICS!** Didn't faze Mama one bit, no sirree! Off she went, like Queen Victoria, to her Diamond Jubilee.

The Limousine drew up in the rear parking lot of the Kingdom Hall, I helped Mama into the wheelchair again, and the four **Black Papists** (as I enjoyed calling them), swept mama into the hall. Now...you wouldn't have dared to raise an eyebrow in Mama's presence about such an arrangement, but I'm just sure that this bevy of Ancient Enemy were recognized. Mama was personally delighted.

Memorial went off swimmingly, with Mama, but without me or the four Catholics. At 9:30, my 85-year-old Cinderella's carriage was at the back door again, and she came joyously home from her evening of dreams.

The occasion was repeated just so, one more time. And then, in 1987, Mr. Taylor carried out Mama's final instructions, this time for her funeral. He did so with grace and commitment; he would have anyhow, but Mama had told him that if he didn't, she would return to haunt him! I think he's pretty safe.

And, I am sure that she has made several more exceptions to her Salvation List, as a result of this beautiful, Ecumenical gesture.

HOW DO I LOVE/LOATHE THEE

from "Sonnets to the Long-eared"
by Elizabeth Basset Browning

I love those long ears, that may be wrapped entirely about thy head...even clipped together with a clothes pin (should one so unkindly choose).

I love(d) the sight of thee, coming home in a shoe box. Little did I wot that in another few months, you would be eating shoe boxes.

I loved thee in pursuit of Fred, the Cat (who really had little to fear of thee, agile and massive as he was.) Thou pursuest him up and onto the dining room table...hence to the floor in an awkward leap that permanently sprained and mis-shaped thy front paws...and **thou learned naught from thy experience!**

I loved thy very excesses, for thou art the **Spirit of Excess.** Eatst thou? My God! Eatest everything in sight, given the chance (and now, with Lily, the Lover-cat, as thy suspected confederate, thou eatest things not remotely in sight.)

> . . .I love(d) the sight of thee, coming home in a shoe box. Little did I wot that in another few months, you would be eating shoe boxes. . .

And before there was a Lily, there was the coffee cake, "safely stored on cabinet top". Thou gottest to it, anyhow. Thou atest the coffee cake **and ingested the carton** in which it was packed. It cost $60 to have the veterinarian "un-plug/irrigate/enemize" thee back to full function again!

And thou learned naught! Ill-advisedly, we left a full plate (8-10) bratwurst on top of the kitchen table and turned our backs on thee. When thou appeared on the front porch soon thereafter, it was in misery. Thou laidst on thy side for two or three hours, and **every bratwurst was EASILY DISCERNIBLE** on thy distended flank. Dear, dumb doggie!

Love thee as we do, we are appalled by thy doggie-dish manners. 'Tis said to be the result of being severed from home and tit too young, but you become a total canine savage when eating. Poor Bill, the Rascal-cat, will forever have a squint (lucky him, to even have a life left!) for having "encroached" on thy feeding zone as a kitten. Another expensive visit to a veterinarian, to have Bill pieced together...and he only a rash kitten at the time! (He has now grown to a vast cat!)

We caution guests about succumbing to thy importuning looks and manner when they are at the dinner table. They are WELL-ADVISED to count their fingers carefully if they give in to the folly of feeding thee out of hand.

And, thou occasionally smell like a dog, despite the fact that we "gave" thou an "alteration". Thou acteth like a total baby whenever we take thee to the veterinarian...so much so that WE should have been paid by the vet for the entertainment value of thy craven performances. Redundant. Keening, whining, moaning, cravenly groaning...blubbering and howling, snuffling and shuffling...thou makest the world to wonder what we could be doing to a dumb animal to produce such profound suffering. (It's not that they have actually done a thing to thee...thou begin thy litany of woe the very instant thou sensest thy destination. Yet, when you art "sent to camp" at the vet's boarding kennels, thou seemest as happy as a clam, if not as bright. Hast thee no saving virtues, (or why should this have been penned at all)?

Well…thou art a punctual, dedicated defecater. Thy mistress hast only to take thee to the right spot on the greensward, give a command, and instant evacuation will occur...a tremendously efficient process it would seem to those who have had to range the whole of West Auburn...or wherever...looking for just that "right" spot...**and earning the honest ire of the landowners and LAWNMOWERS thereafter!**

A final, redundant comment (to any real dog-owner): **Thou art uncritical, continuing love!** At every return, whether from a week in the field or a trip to the basement...and whether owners or Mother or Friends, thou art there to gaze adoringly at them, imploring the pat on the head, the thump on the side, or the ecstatic scratching of any and every part of thy physiognomy ...and to throw in a complimentary "slime-ing!" for any who will indulge thee.

I, who "pen" these words, will find it a dull world when thou goest, as thou inevitable must, to that Great Exercise Yard in the Sky. I have not been able to own a dog since 1939 (I live on Suicide Alley for any active dog), but I have known, enjoyed...maybe even loved...the Princesses, Sugars, and Bradley's of others. As such, I do believe the title, "All Dogs Go to Heaven". (I have my doubts that all humans do, or SHOULD have the same Destination ....but Dogs .....**Amen!**)

DOGGIE ADDENDUM:

I've a sibling (at these prices, you get more than just a "sister") who is NOT a noted doggie lover. (She can leave them alone, or leave them alone!) (intended redundancy) Even she has sterling memories of Bradley, the Basset. He had crossed paths with Friend Ernestine's Russian blue cat, Abigail, **(who brooked no "sass" from any lump of a Basset hound!)** The Old Gray Girl had him backed into a corner, literally, with both ears and nose bleeding from her "five-bladed doggie-slicers". Abigail's fighting weight---about 8 pounds. Bradley's craven, cowering poundage---about 70. **NO MATCH!**) [Said Abigail had once parachuted onto Bradley's back and begun an enthusiastic excavation with her claws to deter his attack on the loving, trusting Sugar, another pet of the household.] **She had his number!**

We close (again?) with the observation that Bradley's passing will bring abundant trauma to at least four humans who knew, and critically, loved him, anyhow!

"Waiting in the Wings"

Lily, the house cat and Bumptious Bill (as mentioned above)

Farewell, My Old Gray Menace (already in print) book #1

Princess, Kizzy, George I, and II - the E. G. Parish pet squad

Funeral Tribute to Sugar

THE WHISTLING WIRES

Visits to the town's dry goods stores weren't exactly a staple of childhood imagination in the '30's...in at least not mine. Such stores...Penny's, Schaab's, McBride's, all important fixtures in local retailing...were places your mothers went, and your sisters worked, but not of even marginal interest to a raw-natured youth such as myself. Oh, indeed, you just **had** to make a trip there for your new shoes once or twice a year, unless you were the Nebelung type (whatever that might have been). And, during the dreaded "back-to-school" period in late summer, you might be drug there. But, hey, it wasn't half the interest of Mike Lumm's grocery or the Thompkins Ice Cream Parlor or Staman's Drug Store, **except for the whistling wires in the old Penny's store!**

...and it had a variation on the classic "God-and-the-machine" ideas of the Greeks...

Early footnote: Even a grocery wasn't of interest, unless you could cadge a sample paring of cheese, or a complimentary jaw-breaker. The ice cream parlor...self explanatory, as was Staman's soda fountain. End of footnote.

But, Penny's had a unique system of handling money, and it had a variation on the classic "God-and-the-machine" ideas of the Greeks. No showgirl had to make change in Penny's. A mysterious being, located on the mezzanine floor back and above you, exercised that responsibility. Your shop girl noted your purchases on a sales slip, and taking that and the paper money proffered, attached both of them to a small clip/cup/trolley (Well, it IS hard to describe!). You see, she detached the bottom half of the "trolley cup" with a half-twist, clipped the sales slip and the paper money in a sort of alligator clamp on the bottom, and then re-attached it to the "trolley" top. Once in place, she then took hold of a wooden hand grip, hanging from the end of the propulsive system. A firm pull/tug/jerk furnished the motive power to propel the cup-trolley up gently sloping wires to the cashier's cage on the aforementioned mezzanine. (Egad! All those words just to tell you that it **"whistled"** as it sped up the wires [and when it came back down again]!)

Weeeel l l l l,.......anyhow, the cashier did ALL the figuring about change, probably also inspected the simple addition on the sales slip, made the change, enclosed any coins inside the cup...and maybe the folded paper money, also...attached the sales receipt to the alligator clip, and returned all to the appropriate station via the wire trolley...whistling. Ah, not a shrill newsboy's whistle; but rather , a sleeting whistle.../a hissing sound, if you will.

It all took not very long...not more than two or three minutes unless it was during the Friday night or Saturday night rush period. You, the customer, made polite chit-chat with the salesgirl, or inspected nearby merchandise or your manicure or whatever else. It's rather unlikely that you did further impulse shopping, as you would be enticed to do in most modern stores. First, the range of merchandise was vastly less then, than now; and also economic conditions did not provide as much discretionary spending power (You knew what you needed, and you rather more likely stuck to a careful shopping regimen then.)

Your purchases were discretely wrapped already, and likely with no store logo to proclaim you the "smart shopper" (or unwitting advertiser) of a particular establishment...brown paper and a serviceable binding from a cone that must have held miles of cheap string. (And when you got it home, you smoothed out the paper for further use, and you wound the string in a household ball, and weren't thought eccentric for doing so, either!)

How else do I remember that Penny's Store? Shoe department in the back, I think; dry goods and sewing supplies on the mezzanine; much more open space than today's stores; NO air-conditioning, and no complaints about it, either; not exactly overpaid if you were a shop girl (My sister "moonlighted" there, in addition to working at Newberry's and the Auburn Rubber Company at times.)

Wooden floors? I think so. Very large display windows, with very discrete mannequins, when used at all. A wedge shaped entrance that did...and still does...protect you from some inclement weather.

A prevailing odor? Perhaps the subtle, "perfum-y" odor from the counters of "bolted" cloth...not an unpleasant smell at all.

The lighting? Incandescent...not the harsh glare of fluorescence for Penny's, or Schaabs, or McBrides. If there was a quality to that light, it was warm, yellow-ish, and weak, by present standards. But, in that day-and-age **and in that store, you didn't have to worry about seeing the quality of what you bought,** for it wasn't quality that eventually brought that venerable institution to an end in downtown Auburn!

"Sic transit", the Nebraska boy's dream, at least in Auburn.

VARIATIONS ON A MEDICAL THEME

"Tis an ill wind that blows no good"...or so the saying goes. How true! How true! Even the most nauseous ailment is good for a few licks at the local bridge tables, or in Cricket's Bar. Thus it was that I found myself recently; to wit:

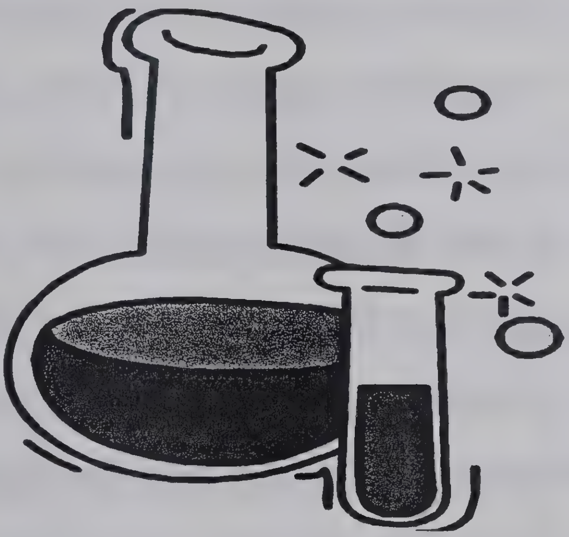
I had fallen victim to some mid-summer virus, whose principal effect was a growing sore throat...roughly similar to a 6 or 8 consecutive summers of tonsillitis that plagued my childhood. I hied myself to my doctor, who prescribed a round of penicillin **and gargling.** Of the latter, I slowly made the discovery that I didn't have much...or enough...practice at this practice and wasn't very practiced at it at all, practically speaking. The throat got sore-er and sore-er (and pretty sorr-y) before I finally caught on that you must gargle for an extended period of time if it is to do you any real good.

And then there was the interesting matter of WHAT you use to gargle. "Try apple juice," said my doctor. "It tastes better."

> ...**you CANNOT assume** that everyone knows how to gargle...

"Well, now," saith I. "I don't have any apple juice, and I don't mind salt water." Salt water it was. Salt water, badly done, that is!

For, you see, I had rarely resorted to gargling before, and **you CANNOT assume** that everyone knows how to gargle, as it were, like a songbird at the bath! Too much in your mouth at once, and you dribble in a most unattractive fashion, much akin to a toddler having a first experience trying to swallow baby "glop", or wallpaper paste, or whatever it is we inflict on our wee-est and dear-est!



And...**and...AND...** "How long do you gurgle at a gargle?" No one told me that length was any priority, and it took me three days to discover that the longer I gargled, the less sore my throat was afterward. So, my misery began on a Wednesday, and it was Saturday before I could do ANY effective swallowing. Spit a lot, I did! Didn't swallow at all, if I could help it. Weight dropped from 222.5 (doctor's scales) to 207.5 (my scales, BBB). But then, I got the hang of it all.

And, ! ! !E*U*R*E*K*A*! ! ! ***DISCOVERY***

You can...I say...you can turn your voice box on during gargling and launch yourself into some of the strangest melodic adventures you'd ever (never?) want to hear! A whole new field of musical interpretation has been "cracked" (last word VERY carefully chosen in previous statement)!

For...not only can you medicate yourself, as it were, but you can also entertain the troops (whatever), and entertain yourself at the same time. Nice day? Then do "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'" from Oklahoma. Or, given the classical bent, do "Un bel Dia" from Butterfly. Going to lead the opening and closing songs at the next Lions' meeting? "America, the Beautiful" and "Back Home Again in Indiana" will take on a character never heard before, once gargled. The sky's the limit; be of unfettered imagination here and break new ground!

And then, further fascinating variations: Why restrict yourself to salt water or apple juice? Would not Oenophiles want to gargle with a glass of Dom Perignon? Should we not soon see the frogs on TV doing a hearty "Bud-weis-gurgggggggle"? This approach has very obvious advantages! *No unsightly spitting*, and little need to time the length of gargle! When you fall down and pass out, you've had enough. True, you may get some strange stares when you confess that your cirrhosis of the liver began with gargling for a sore throat...that your DT's are the direct result of innovative medical treatment...that you've served time for GUI (!), but hasn't progress always had a price, anyhow?

And, it gets totally out of control, you can always join GA.

Al fin...I sorta' hated to get well. I regained much of the lost weight, I lost the extra salt (which is "shorted" in my current diet), and I enjoyed the possibility that a hyper-inquisitive neighbor was dealing with the mystery of why I was standing at the kitchen sink, chin thrust high in the air, while from somewhere came the strangled melodic imitations of opera. (For, you see, my last selection was "The Mad Scene" from *Lucia de Lammermoor* [and worse! I was doing the orchestral portion, rather than the soprano aria!])

PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHILE PUNISHING A WAYWARD LAWN

I had just been giving "what-ho" to my undisciplined grasses and weeds that had grown out over the West 7th Street curb (A thing of beauty, no less, in itself!), when age and common sense forced me to take a breather. Sitting on the front porch (and nursing an incipient blister on my thumb, I chanced to notice a lovely flicker of white coming across the lawn. No, not a wind-borne cigarette, but God knows there are aplenty of those to be found here in the "West 7th Street Drop Zone for Motoring Slobs"!

No, it was a passing cabbage butterfly, out prospecting for sex and cabbage plants, I should guess. Philosophy, ho! I sat wondering, as the butterfly was joined by another procreation-maddened flicker of white, about the mixed blessings of nature. They looked so sparkling...almost as though they were ricocheting off unseen currents of air...as they conducted their mid-air courtship. Not a thing negative about them...until you consider that their mating would be followed by a search for cabbage-family plants on which to lay the eggs. And then, the conflict. Oh, please understand...Nature must have had some purpose to creating the cabbage looper,

. . .I sat wondering...about the mixed blessings of nature. . .

and in a general sense, I'm willing to cooperate. But, **NIMCP (Not in ***MY*** Cabbage patch, Bunkie!)**

And if you think my attitude a bit starchy on the subject of cabbages, WAIT, O, WAIT UNTIL WE GET TO **MY ***TOMATOES*** AND THE TOMATO HORNWORM!** I'll risk the Wrath of Providence...and I don't mean Senator Claiborne Pell, either!...to offer the opinion that there is no earthly value to a tomato worm! I have seen, once and now forgotten, the moth that lays the egg that becomes the ravager of tomato plants. It wasn't any great beauty, and...even had it been...it would not have justified its wayward children eating my Better Boys and Wisconsin Experiment Station Hybrids (Yes, there was/is (?) such a tomato...the gift to me by a lovely old Mrs. Seltenright of Butler).

And so, as I view the questionable beauties of Creation, be they cabbage butterflies, "tomato" moths, or even the milkweed-eating progeny of the magnificent Monarch...be as free as the breezes that blow, but **BE GONE** from my garden!

I'LL BET YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME!

One of the lovely perils of teaching...and retiring thereafter...is to be witnessed again this Saturday night at the Auburn Lions tent: the return of the student to the old teacher! I will be sitting low behind the counter, counting the incoming cash (a labor of love for me, you may be sure!) and my attention will be called to a stranger, standing at the counter.

"I'll bet you don't remember me!"

Well, having just been concentrating on portraits of Lincoln, Hamilton, Jackson, Grant, and hopefully a Franklin once in a while...it may take me a moment or two to register on the present face. But, I should; for they are faces from my past of teaching. And I can "make" their evening if I do remember them.

And what makes the student that I can remember? I rarely forget a 6' tall, red-headed, freckled girl...or any other exceptional physical type. I rarely forget dazzling scholars...the kind that made you so nervous because you fully knew that they were smarter than you, and would in later life considerably outshine you. Disciplinary problems? Well, yes, you would remember them, but they rarely look you up in later life, anyhow...so, no problem.

The ones that give me the greatest joy, however, are the everyday, not-so-run-of-the-mill good citizens who settled here in the county, sent me their good children, served their families, churches, and civic groups well...and then, paradoxically, when I would like them to call me by my given name, they still refer to me as **MR. STACKHOUSE** despite my happiness to now consider them a friend. (I've never been fond of my given name, and I rarely encourage anyone younger than I to use it. But, these fine folks, to whom I would gladly give the right, will be calling me MISTER even at my funeral, I suspect.

...and then, paradoxically, when I would like them to call me by my given name, they still refer to me as **MR. STACKHOUSE** despite my happiness to now consider them a friend...

Have I failed to mention the weak student, and the student rebel? Well, now, 40 years after some of them demonstrated a very limited interest in English grammar, I must honestly observe that they have done quite will with their lives, grammar not withstanding. And the rebels? I can still remember that they were rebelling, and what they were rebelling about...but it seems rather pointless now, and not worth the trouble we made of it. I don't really know whether that demonstrates growth on my part, a more mature judgement, or just senile boredom.

But, the most delightful moment of each last-night-of-the-Fair evening is when, paradoxically, I do remember someone whom 40 ensuing years has not removed from my memory. Let me tell you, "It more than makes their evening!"

And those that I cannot remember? I beg off, citing senility, or the changes that 20-30-40 years must have made in them. I can still light up their evening with a joke, sorta'. "Gee, that must have been Scott/ Concord/Concord-Spencer/Leo/Riverdale/Garrett/Waterloo/Garrett/ Eastside/Dekalb...and you must be almost 30 years old by now!" This last remark is a PATENT FRAUD, and they know it, and they know that I know it, but they enjoy it anyhow.

So, should you come by this Saturday...or any future time and say to me, "I'll bet you don't remember me!" I may have to fake it, but I'll try to remember you...or at least make it a warm moment for you.

Eckhart Public Library

603 S. Jackson Street Auburn, IN 46706
Phone: 219-925-2414

Patron is responsible for all
material borrowed.

ECKHART PUBLIC LIB.
8401 9100 125 067 5

HECKMAN
BINDERY, INC.
Bound-To-Please®
MAY 03
N. MANCHESTER, INDIANA 46962